A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

OPE WITHOUT MISSILE
WHO IS AGAINST?

NEW TIMES

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NICARAGUA: THE REVOLUTION NEEDS PEACE!

DJERBA,
A TREASURE ISLAND

ICE HOCKEY COACHES
INTERVIEWED

1917–1987

TIME AND PEOPLE

"This happened in one of the succession of crop failure years that followed 1903," the country doctor Shingaryov wrote in his book "The Dying Village." "The father of the family, his health undermined by backbreaking labour at a stone quarry, was at home with the children. There was nothing in the house, neither bread nor money. His wife had gone to the next village to look for alms. Her children and sick husband waited in vain for her to return. The hungry little ones cried, begging their father for something to eat.... In despair the wretched father decided to set the house on fire and burn himself and the children. He began hauling straw and dry twigs into the izba, and was about to set it alight when neighbours chanced to look in and prevented the awful disaster from happening...."

A terrible occurrence, but not a rare one in those years. Exhausting toil, landlessness, poverty and illiteracy were the lot of the majority of the peasantry before 1917. And it was only logical that within hours of the victory of the revolution the Soviet government issued its Decree on the Land. Some 150 million hectares of land that had belonged to the landowners, the tsar, and the monasteries were handed over to those who tilled it.

But what was the good of having land when it had to be tilled as before with wooden ploughs, when the poor peasant had no implements, no cattle and no grain to spare? Was he again to go to the rural rich—the kulaks—to work their land, to enter into bondage to them for the loan of a horse to plough his plot or seeds to plant?

Life itself showed the only way out—to join together and work the land collectively. The first agricultural cooperatives and communes sprang up shortly after the revolution.

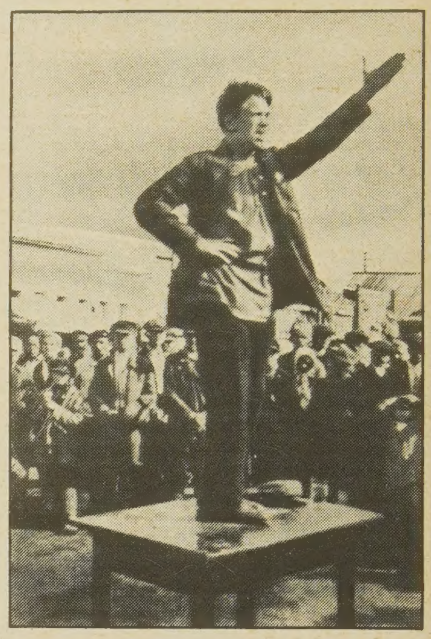
Yet it was quite some time before most of the peasants accepted the idea of cooperative labour. They were not accustomed to working together. A revolution in their thinking had to take place first. And that revolution began in the late twenties when it became increasingly clear that collective farms were more efficient and raised higher crops, and the state helped them with seeds and machinery.

True enough, that gigantic process, collectivization, was attended by mistakes and excesses. Some of them tragic, irreparable. It was a difficult time. Nevertheless, collectivization was essential. It enabled the entire country, the millions of peasants, to take a tremendous stride forward.

"...Where the cries of the flogged once rent the air, where we sweated blood scratching at the earth with wooden ploughs, now tractor engines will sound and the banner of the builders of the new, collective life will wave." That is how the poor peasants and farm labourers of Okhochevka Village worded their decision to form a collective farm in 1930. By the mid-thirties, the collective farm system had won the day once and for all in the countryside.

1929. A collectivization meeting.

1929. "The new life begins!"



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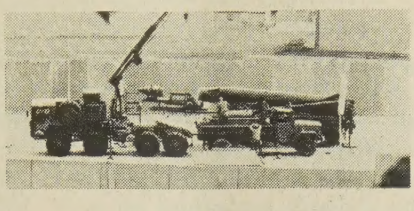

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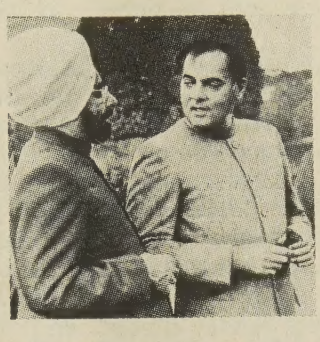

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A FLAT IN A YEAR, AND MORE...
A youth housing complex of blocks of flats that young people are building for themselves, the new community relations this has given rise to and the search for new forms of self-administration in line with the democratic style of Soviet life.

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FROM OUR MAILBAG

I write to express my admiration of the brave attitude you are taking with regard to defusing the nuclear situation. I am not alone in respecting your moves in this vital area. Furthermore, many of us are ashamed that other European and American leaders will not accept your initiative.

REX TOYN
Bristol, Great Britain

Let us do a bit of daydreaming and imagine that glasnost has also come to my country—the United States of America. Then the politicians and capitalist press—those dabhands in anti-Sovietism—would have the wind taken out of their sails. The idea that the U.S. is the "saviour of the world" which has been inculcated on the masses for years on end would suddenly have no leg to stand on. Once we began to get true tidings from the U.S.S.R. we would start to make comparisons which, I am sure, wouldn't be in our favour.

And now, let's see how things are in our country. In Forsyth County, Georgia, U.S., for example, where the K.K.K. runs the show, one cannot live peacefully or safely unless you are a white person. So, where is our much touted glasnost, that is, "the freedom of the press"! It is nonexistent. Instead of articles denouncing the excesses of local racists the newspapers contain calls to put pressure on the governments of the U.S.S.R., Cuba and Nicaragua where, they allege, human rights are violated.

Well, perhaps we should make glasnost an internationalist word, a peace word, a working-class word and demand that glasnost apply to our administration's accountability! What do you think!

EDDIE G. HINES
Fargo, U.S.A.

EDITORIAL

TWO CURRENTS IN THE OCEAN

Though not a single Soviet trawler has yet called on Vanuatu —though this is provided for under a Soviet fishing agreement with this Pacific island state—the West has already imagined an armada of Soviet battleships and aircraft carriers anchored in local ports.

Plainly, it is not just Hollywood that dreams up scenarios for anti-Soviet thrillers of "Red Dawn over the South Seas" or "over the Pacific." At any rate, in Australia and New Zealand recently, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the U.K. Foreign Secretary, tried hard to alarm Pacific countries, big and small, with "the Soviet threat" and "the hand of Moscow." Now the appropriate offices in Western capitals are busy handing on to local authorities in, for example Wellington, their expertise in playing up spy mania.

One would think that two deep-flowing currents were crossing one another in the politics of Asia and the Pacific.

In Vladivostok last year the Soviet leader put forward an in-depth programme for strengthening security and promoting peace and cooperation in this part of the world. The jointly drafted Soviet-Indian Delhi Declaration has contributed to the philosophy of nuclear-age politics. Positive developments are to be observed in relations with various countries, and improvements in dealings with China, or Moscow's more energetic dialogue with the countries of ASEAN and Oceania are increasingly evident. Though each move is of definite value, the overall objective, and the trend as a whole are more important. Guarantees of stability and peace are vital for this region, populated as it is by two thirds of the human race.

However, in their attitude to this vast area, Western capitals still think in what are primarily militaristic and neocolonialist categories. They are ignoring the peaceful aspirations of the people here, as well as their anti-nuclear demands. Unlike the U.S.S.R. and China, the U.S., France, and the U.K. have declined to recognize the Rarotonga Treaty whereby the countries of Oceania have proclaimed the South Pacific a nuclear-free zone.

In the same way Washington and its allies have for years been stonewalling the convening of an international conference on the Indian Ocean. They are plainly reluctant to tolerate its demilitarization and conversion to a zone of peace. Today the real-life U.S. aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk and not some film mock-up is furrowing its waters. Entering Karachi harbour, for instance, it reasserts the special role the Pentagon attaches to Pakistan in its designs. The U.S. is making energetic use of the country as a springboard from which to exert pressure on other states in South and Southwest Asia, and in particular in the undeclared war against Afghanistan.

Today there are plans to provide Islamabad with highly sophisticated AWACS reconnaissance aircraft to be flown by American crews.

It is often said that European recipes will not do to strengthen security in Asia and the Pacific. Although the development of a security system in this part of the world is bound to differ from the one Europe is trying to build, the two concepts have much in common; both envisage confidence-building measures and not attempts to fan suspicion, the lowering of the level of military confrontation, and not the whipping up of tensions. That is the only way peace and stability in this region, as well as universal security, can be ensured.

THE REVOLUTION NEEDS PEACE!

The U.S. administration is not abandoning its hopes of using the contras, who are chiefly engaged in fighting against the republic's peaceful civilians, to topple the Nicaraguan government. Addressing American newspaper publishers early this month, Ronald Reagan said once again that while he remained in office, support for the "freedom fighters," as the White House calls the contras, would continue. Small wonder that the United States is bending over backwards to subvert the process of a peaceful settlement in Central America.

VLADISLAV CHIRKOV

One sometimes has the impression that the greatest friend of the Nicaraguan revolution is the U.S. press. Every now and then a newspaper or magazine solicitously warns the Sandinistas that American troops are about to attack Nicaragua. Sometimes even the proposed date is specified. A weekly published in Los Angeles confidentially informed the world that the White House planned to invade Nicaragua at the beginning of 1987.

We are almost halfway through the year, but no open invasion has occurred. It may be that the Los Angeles weekly was moved by the best of intentions. But I would hazard the suggestion that to believe and assure others that Washington, in the present situation, is seriously contemplating using troops against Nicaragua is to underestimate the eggheads who advise President Reagan.

The United States has learned to its cost what it is like to become embroiled in a conflict in another country and how difficult it is to withdraw without loss of face. The "Vietnam syndrome" persists. As Time magazine put it, "American boys should not be seen dying on the nightly news." There is no hope of a blitzkrieg, Grenada-style: the Sandinistas can stand up for themselves. So, in late April the CBS network in its report from an area of Nicaragua close to the Honduras border showed peasant huts burned by the contras, crippled tractors and bulldozers and blown-up power line pylons.

"High pressure"

Let the contras do the fighting and we shall provide money and weapons. This is the gist of the "low-intensity warfare" tactics the U.S. is using against Nicaragua (adjusted to local conditions, the same tactics are used in Angola, Afghanistan and Kampuchea).

It is rather like a "no war, no peace" situation, when the revolution is being harassed by terrorist sorties in the hope that worn down by difficulties, objective and subjective, it will eventually succumb. However, the sharp sword of direct aggression is always at the ready to make the Sandinistas keep more men under arms, and buy more weapons, diverting resources from their economy. As a result, the Nicaraguan government is now spending about half its budget on defence, which is far in excess of what is needed to protect itself against the contra raids. The revolution's enemies "want Nicaragua to be a huge barracks filled with hungry people," writes Eduardo Galeano, an Uruguayan journalist.

In other words, Washington is doing everything to aggravate Nicaragua's difficulties. Prices are soaring, food and prime necessities are in short supply. The gross domestic product has been on the decline for three years in succession.

Compounding the objective causes, including the American trade embargo, are the Sandinistas' own miscalculations. "Naturally, revolutionary reforms cannot be carried out without sacrifices and errors, which are part of revolutionary change," says the Interior Minister Tomas Borge. Some mistakes, though, could have been avoided. For instance, the mass resettlement of Indians from the border areas into the country's interior was unjustified, as the Nicaraguan leaders now admit. It merely swelled the ranks of the counterrevolutionaries. Attempts are being made to remedy the situation. Nor is Nicaragua immune to such old maladies as red tape, corruption in the civil service and speculation. A lot is being said in the country about the need to combat these problems.

Under the decree on the state of emergency, some articles of the Constitution relating to civil rights and freedoms have been suspended. The press is still censored. Washington is using these forced measures as a pretext for whipping up an anti-Nicaraguan propaganda campaign.

In this situation it is not easy for Nicaragua to demonstrate to the world the validity of the course it has chosen. So it is fair to assume that Nicaragua is not a great source of anxiety to the American administration ideologically, i. e., as an example for others. The Sandinistas will not be a real danger to Washington on that score until the revolutionary reform in Nicaragua has begun to yield tangible benefits to the majority of the population. The United States is doing all it can to prevent this happening.

In trying to keep the Nicaraguan revolution "in a state of suspension" it

In Nicaragua, the contras mainly attack schools, hospitals and the plantations and buildings of farming cooperatives. Below: A peasant saving a baby during a contra raid on a farming township in the department of Nueva Segovia.

Prensa Latina—TASS photo

is pinning its hopes on the erosion of the Sandinista regime, discord within the Sandinist National Liberation Front which unites various political tendencies from Social Democrats to clerics. The U.S. hopes that the deteriorating economic situation will lead some members of the Front to seek contacts with the émigré community. Washington would then promptly offer a major loan or even free aid to the tune of a couple of hundred million dollars.

Seeking to keep up pressure on the Sandinistas, the Reagan administration and some Congressmen have not dismissed the possibility of a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua. For example, the Senate (before the Republicans lost their majority there) voted down—just in case—Edward Kennedy's amendment that sought to ban the use of U.S. ground forces to invade Nicaragua.

The Pentagon is stepping up its military preparations by staging constant military "games" close to Nicaragua's borders. The aim is to remind the Sandinistas of the constant threat of a massive intervention. The badgering is endless. No sooner had the American-Honduran exercises Vicente Tosta-87 and Pegasus-87 ended than the U.S. and Honduran army, navy and air force manoeuvres Solid Shield-87 got under way on April 25. This is a major exercise by Central American standards, involving a total of 57,000 troops.

Four days before the start of this simulated war, Ronald Reagan extended the administration's mandate for a real war in the economic field by prolonging the trade embargo on Nicaragua for a second time. Nicaragua has lost some $200 million as a result of the embargo since May 1985.

The extension of the boycott by the White House prompted anti-American demonstrations, which were held all over Nicaragua on May 4, the National Dignity Day. This date commemorates a landmark event in the history of the Nicaraguan people's struggle for their independence and sovereignty: 60 years ago, on May 4, 1927, Augusto Cesar Sandino, "the general of free men," rejected the American interventionist forces' ultimatum demanding that the patriots disarm, and decided to continue hostilities against the occupiers.

What hampers Contadora

The present level of tensions in Central America cannot continue indefinitely. Efforts, sometimes very vigorous, are being made to normalize the situation. However, the meeting of the foreign ministers of eight states—the members of the Contadora group (Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama) and the Latin American Contadora support group (Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay) held in Buenos Aires in April, like the previous series of such meetings, while reaffirming that the Contadora process is alive and well, failed to make any noticeable advance towards a peaceful settlement in Central America.

Why is progress so slow, if indeed there is any progress? Part of the reason is pressure from the United States, which has been a brake on this process.

The U.S. attitude to Contadora will be seen if only from the following: a Miami-based advertising agency has received $1.8 million from an unknown source to launch a misinformation campaign to discredit the efforts of the Contadora and its support group to settle the regional crisis. This was revealed by Venezuelan foreign minister Simon Consalvi.

Regrettably, the "Contadorans" have to look back over their shoulder at their great northern neighbour. After all, the Latin American countries are traditionally linked to, and dependent on, the U.S. which belongs to the same "Western civilization." In other words, it is a case of class solidarity.

Occasionally the Contadora countries and their Latin American backers exhibit a guarded and indecisive attitude with regard to the numerous constructive peace initiatives launched by Managua.

Why does this happen? The bourgeois democratic governments in Latin America, while by and large supportive of Nicaragua's sovereignty, regard the Sandinista regime with a degree of suspicion. For some of them it is too "socialist," this despite the fact that some heads of the Contadora governments espouse "socialist" and social democratic views. They also feel that there is too little pluralism in Nicaragua, forgetting that in Nicaragua dissenters sit in parliament, and are at times very vocal in expressing their disagreement with the government.

A short digression is in order here. If the ruling quarters in Latin American countries do not approve of everything in Nicaragua, why, then, do they oppose open U.S. interference? Because by defending Nicaragua's independence they are upholding their own independence and sovereignty.

Another source of doubt and vacillation is the fear that Managua could find itself totally in the camp of Moscow and Havana.

It was an unhappy day when the term "camp" came to be used in international relations. Too often it goes hand in hand with the adjective "military." Why should the human race be divided into camps? Let it be a single family, provided, of course, each people has the right to choose its social system and form of government freely and democratically, and preserve its national and cultural identity. That would go a long way towards eliminating seats of tension in the world. This applies to regional conflicts and the possibility of avoiding a global—nuclear and non-nuclear—conflict.

Nurturing conflicts

There are indications that the United States positively needs regional conflicts. It needs them in all parts of the world, in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa and the Falklands (Malvinas) area. Washington probably sees these conflicts as a means of regulating the level of confrontation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Let us take a closer look at this thesis, enunciated in an official Soviet statement.

With a little ingenuity, the "hand of Moscow" (Havana, Hanoi—the list is open-ended) can be found in any crisis. It is enough for the Soviet Union to dispatch an official or even a non-government delegation to a "trouble spot," to send medical supplies, tractors, food relief or machine tools, let alone weapons (supplied, incidentally, on perfectly legal grounds) for a hue and cry to be raised. It should be clear to everyone that the U.S.S.R. is supplying only defensive weapons to Nicaragua. Nicaragua's military doctrine is defensive.

There is nothing Washington would wish for more than trouble close to its borders, in Central America, for example. It could then declare its security to be directly threatened. Americans would readily swallow this, and Congress would become more amenable in approving further shots in the arm for "friends" to foment the conflict. That American legislators, who hate to be accused of being "pinks," regard the contras as friends was highlighted by the recent incident involving $40 million left over from the $100 million allocated last year to aid anti-Nicaraguan units. Forty million dollars were to be re-endorsed. Initially Congress threatened to freeze the money. But light pressure on the part of the administration was enough for the Senate to yield. The White House has already requested $105 million for the 1988 fiscal year which begins on October 1, 1987. And I think it would be safe to assume that this money will be appropriated after a show of resistance on Capitol Hill that will not, however, last long enough to allow the contra movement to peter out.

So far, it has been impossible to avoid regional conflicts. The situation in the Third World is too complex and entangled. But one cannot turn these conflicts into an instrument for confrontation between the two systems (which objectively exists), especially between the two most powerful and most heavily armed countries in the world—the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

You can't put out a flame by fanning it

The United States, far from helping to secure a settlement in Central America, is actually fuelling the flames of the conflict by outfitting and training the contras and arming Honduras (which they are using as their main base) over and above the needs prompted by that country's defence interests. That small state with a population of some four million already has as many as 60 warplanes that can be used offensively. Meanwhile, the U.S. intends to provide Honduras with between 18 and 24 F-5E Tiger fighter planes within the next eighteen months. The planes are equipped with missiles to strike at ground targets.

Tel Aviv, too, would do well to desist from its Central American activities. Israel is supplying arms, some of them offensive, to Honduras and El Salvador. And it is clearly implicated in the Iran-contras affair.

Only recently the London Observer mentioned a British firm as being implicated in supplying arms to the Nicaraguan contras.

For all that, Nicaragua is being accused of attempts at expansion. This is a groundless and ridiculous accusation. It would be of the utmost naivété on the part of the Sandinistas to try to spread their influence outside their own country artificially, and not by the mere force of example, while they are still facing serious internal opposition.

Washington is accusing Nicaragua of "excessive militarization." It is true that Nicaragua has the largest and strongest army in Central America. But this army has not been created for aggression. Nicaraguans do not feel the need to prove the advantages of their system through military superiority. Such an approach would be poor publicity for the system. They need a combat-ready army simply in order to ensure the possibility of putting the potential advantages of their system into practice.

Rumours that the Sandinist People's Army is overarmed and aggressive are greatly exaggerated: the Nicaraguans have some ten heavy helicopters and no modern fighter planes. Helicopters are weapons of defence. But even here the Nicaraguans lag behind some of their neighbours, which are Washington's allies.

Judging from the press, more and more people in Latin America feel that a solution to the Central American crisis must be Latin American and without any foreign interference. This applies above all to Washington, which is being remarkably slow in realizing that the United States is not the whole of America. During his recent Moscow visit, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz was told that the escalation of tensions over Nicaragua was inadmissible and that the United States in Central America was hovering on the brink of a large-scale armed aggression. To extinguish a fire, it is necessary, as a minimum to desist from feeding the flames. Shultz was told that Nicaragua—an independent sovereign state—would not be abandoned in the face of American aggression, but that it is receiving and will continue to receive the necessary assistance.

The Soviet Union, which has repeatedly voiced its support for the efforts of the Contadora group, has scrupulously adhered to the position of non-interference.

All parties concerned (and in this, as in similar cases, the whole planet is the party concerned) should let the Latin American states sort out the situation calmly and without undue emotionalism, to enable them to choose the best of the numerous proposals.

Alternatives

Proposals are coming both from the Contadora group and Nicaragua. One of the Sandinista government's proposals is the creation of a zone free of foreign military presence in the region. Nicaragua is prepared to discuss arms ceilings with other Central American states—especially with regard to helicopters and heavy artillery. Managua has also proposed limiting the scale of military exercises. Among the ideas aired was the international inspection of Nicaragua's borders, which, on the one hand, would stop the contras infiltrating Nicaragua, and on the other, put an end to all talk of "Sandinista expansion."

These constructive initiatives, however, are being stonewalled. Washington arrogantly ignores them, and its allies in the region—Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica—keep coming up with fresh excuses, reservations and even slanderous allegations ("could these proposals be part of a communist conspiracy?"). If and when the U.S. speaks in favour of negotiations to settle the

GIs training for jungle fighting during exercises on Honduran territory.

TASS photo

crisis, it puts forward unacceptable conditions, directly or through its local clients. For example, repeated attempts have been made to force Nicaragua to disarm unilaterally. In late April, Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega reaffirmed his country's readiness to resume vital talks with the United States.

The so-called Tegucigalpa group (Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica) has also come up with some proposals.

Costa Rica has proposed a plan of its own.

Mention should be made of the stand of Guatemala, which opposes any foreign interference in the affairs of the region. The government of President Vinicio Cerezo, which is committed to a policy of "active neutrality" in the Central American crisis, has taken an important practical step in banning the training of "volunteers" from among the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries on Guatemalan territory.

A key condition for a settlement is regard for the special interests of each country. Every country has its own. The Nicaraguans want their revolution to be left alone, and to be allowed to translate their chosen social course into reality. Costa Rica and Honduras—for all the dislike their ruling circles feel for the Sandinistas or the El Salvador rebels—are wary about these countries being drawn into a still more serious conflict in the region.

Reasonable compromises are necessary if a just settlement is to be reached: a realistic policy must rely on the art of compromise if it is to be successful.

It bears repeating that there should be no outside interference.

A combination of the above factors would, in my opinion, pave the way for peace in Central America.

Whether the crisis is settled on the basis of a Contadora Act of Peace or some other document is in the final count not all that important. It is the essence that matters. And the essence is that a favourable situation should be provided for the free and independent development of all the peoples of Central America and that peace and tranquillity in the region should prevail. ■

Zero progress to "zero option"

On the morning of May 7, ex-U.S. Defence Secretary Robert McNamara attended an F.R.G. Bundestag session as a guest of honour. He heard out the speeches by Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Hans-Jochen Vogel, leader of the Social Democratic opposition, and made for the press club to present his new book, just out in a German translation, to newsmen.

Having analyzed the consequences of the strategy of nuclear deterrence, the author arrives at the conclusion that any armed conflict could rapidly escalate into a nuclear war which would be certain to destroy our civilization. McNamara added that the risk involved in using nuclear weapons was too high to be justifiable militarily, politically or ethically.

By sheer coincidence on the same day the weekly Zeit carried a lengthy article by another ex-Defence Minister—of the F.R.G. this time—Helmut Schmidt, who had also for many years been head of the Bonn government. In the article Helmut Schmidt admitted for the first time that he had always regarded the "flexible response strategy" as absurd because its use would take millions of lives. In a nuclear war any "defence action" is out of the question.

Fear of disarmament

But let us get back to the old pump house in which the Bundestag gathers in session while its proper seat is under repair. On May 7, Chancellor Kohl made a government statement there concerning the recent Soviet initiatives as regards medium-range and operational-tactical missiles. The Chancellor took rather a long time to work up to the main point, mentioning among other things the strategy of "flexible response." As distinct from McNamara and Schmidt, he sees "no alternative to this strategy in the foreseeable future." Therefore, he concludes, "our alliance cannot give up nuclear weapons entirely."

Some local observers liken the Bonn political scene today to the theatre of the absurd. Until quite recently Alfred Dregger, chairman of the "Christian" faction in the Bundestag, Volker Rühe, his deputy, Defence Minister Manfred Wörner and other CDU/CSU leaders referred to the Soviet Union's allegedly "overwhelming" superiority in missiles with ranges of under 1,000 km as the main obstacle in the way to an agreement on the elimination of U.S. and Soviet medium-range missiles. One would expect them to be the first to welcome the new initiative on the part of the U.S.S.R. which, wishing to facilitate the signing of a medium-range missile agreement, has suggested the scrapping of operational-tactical missiles as well (with ranges of from 500 to 1,000 km). Nothing of the kind happened, however. The right-wing CDU/CSU leaders categorically objected to the "double zero option."

This looks absurd only at first glance. In fact, the CDU/CSU leaders are guided by a certain logic—the perverted logic of those who think in terms of "deterrence" and dread disarmament.

It will be recalled that Bonn tried to tie in the medium-range missile issue with that of shorter-range missiles long before the Reykjavik summit. As it prepared for the summit, Washington sounded Bonn out on the American "interim decision," which in no way provided for the elimination of medium-range missiles. It was then that Dregger suggested including shorter-range missiles in the "interim decision."

In Reykjavik the U.S.S.R. made a move which came as a surprise to Bonn: it called for the elimination of Soviet and U.S. medium-range missiles in Europe, i.e., actually accepted the "zero

option" put forward earlier by Ronald Reagan and officially supported by all the NATO member states, the F.R.G. included. It transpired, however, that many in the CDU/CSU coalition had declared for the "zero option" merely on the assumption that the U.S.S.R. would never accept it. The CSU leader Franz Josef Strauss, who calls a spade a spade more often than other politicians in his circle, admitted that NATO had "fallen a victim to its own strategy" and demanded, in no uncertain terms, that his government reject the "zero option." Had the government followed his advice it would have exposed itself for all to see as an opponent of disarmament. This didn't enter into Bonn's calculations, of course. The Liberals, seeking to impress voters as champions of détente, would hardly have welcomed such an about-turn, either. Moreover, Bonn couldn't but take into account the fact that Washington had begun to show interest in reaching an agreement on medium-range missiles. Therefore, the Steel Helmets faction, an influential right-wing grouping in the CDU/CSU, preferred to manoeuvre. We are not against a "zero option" on medium-range missiles, its spokesmen said; we are only against this option being accepted in isolation from other issues, such as that of shorter-range missiles. The obvious idea was to tie as many knots and put forward as many preconditions as possible in order eventually to derail the "zero option."

This position found its reflection in the government statement of March 18, which defined the basic principles to underlie government policy over the next four years. Kohl accepted the medium-range missile formula worked out in Reykjavik: no such missiles in Europe, and 100 warheads apiece in the Asian part of the U.S.S.R. and the same number in U.S. territory. However, he deemed it necessary to express his concern over the overwhelming superiority the U.S.S.R. allegedly enjoys in shorter-range missiles and suggested an agreement on "equal ceilings" for these weapon systems.

One does not need special insight to see that what Bonn is really interested in is not "equal ceilings" but new rearmament.

False "arguments"

The Soviet proposal for eliminating, along with medium-range missiles, Soviet and American operational-tactical missiles in Europe has knocked the ground from under the feet of those bent on a new "rearmament." But Bonn's missile worshippers won't give up. They're now busy feverishly looking for "arguments" against the "double zero option."

The first argument is that if missiles with ranges of 500 km and over are eliminated, NATO'S "flexible response strategy" will no longer make any sense, and the defence of Western Europe will become "decoupled" from that of the United States. This argument holds no water even from the standpoint of ardent nuclear deterrence advocates. U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz himself pointed out that even if the "zero option" on medium-range missiles is implemented thousands of American nuclear warheads and their carriers—submarine- and aircraft-borne, artillery and tactical missiles—will remain in Western Europe.

The second argument is that tactical missiles with ranges of under 500 km, which are to remain operational after the "double zero option" takes effect, will threaten "German territory" in particular, and that both German states will find themselves in an especially vulnerable position.

Apart from the fact that no one has authorized Bonn to speak for the G.D.R., the question suggests itself: is the F.R.G. more secure today, when it has the Pershing 2 and cruise missile bases in its territory which are potential targets for retaliatory strikes, than in the event they are closed down?

And then, who has ever said tactical missiles are not to be scrapped? Not at any rate the U.S.S.R. and its allies. It is common knowledge that they propose discussing tactical nuclear weapons in Europe—tactical missiles included—at separate multilateral talks.

If F.R.G. leaders are truly concerned lest their country become a "low security zone," why don't they accept the proposal of the G.D.R. and Czechoslovakia to set up a nuclear-free corridor in the centre of Europe? This would minimize the chances of a nuclear conflict erupting in the region.

The third argument is based on the assumption that the Warsaw Treaty countries possess three times the troop strength and conventional capability of the NATO member states.

This has nothing to do with the real situation. The West's pet myth about the Warsaw Treaty's multiple superiority in troops and conventional arms has been repeatedly refuted by experts, Western ones among them.

A rift in the coalition

These "arguments" are far from having the coalition's unanimous support. Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the most influential figure in the Free Democratic Party, has welcomed the new Soviet proposals.

As distinct from the FDP, the CDU/CSU coalition is divided on the missile issue. Certain Bundestag deputies (let alone rank-and-file members of these parties) are obviously dissatisfied with some of the attempts made by their leaders to block an agreement on the elimination of nuclear Euromissiles and to substantiate the need for new "rearmament." Wolfgang Schulhoff, the previously obscure CDU deputy of Düsseldorf, has recently come to the fore. In a Kölner Express interview, which had wide repercussions, he said that the handling of the "missile issue" should no longer be left solely to "disarmament experts" (meaning Dregger, Rühe and the like) who forget somehow that the world will not settle for less than genuine disarmament.

Kohl, who is supposed to decide his government's policy line under the Constitution, has never voiced his view of the situation in public or intervened in the dispute between the members of the coalition he heads. The conference of the leading ministers and coalition party leaders he has conducted came to nothing. No common platform was arrived at. After one such conference, Genscher is said to have irately exclaimed that "the coalition is in the worst mess since 1982" (i.e., since its inception).

On May 7, the Chancellor came to the Bundestag empty-handed. True, he reaffirmed his consent to the "zero option" on medium-range missiles, but gave no answer to the Soviet proposal for the elimination of operational-tactical missiles. Kohl only promised to study it.

In the meantime, the debate on the government statement reaffirmed the existence of profound differences between the FDP, on the one hand, and the CDU/CSU, on the other. While Wolfgang Mischnik, chairman of the liberal faction, said it might be as well to have the "double zero option," Dregger and Rühe warned of the "dangers" supposedly involved in it. Nevertheless, the FDP deputies did not—for reasons of coalition discipline—vote for the draft submitted by the Social Democrats. The SDPG called on the government to promote, rather than obstruct, a U.S.-U.S.S.R. understanding on eliminating nuclear missiles (both medium-range and operational-tactical) in Europe. But all they could agree upon with their partners in the coalition was a scanty resolution to support the Chancellor's government statement. In fact, there was nothing much to support, as the Chancellor had never defined his stand. "Zero progress to zero option," was the press gallery's caustic comment.

F.R.G. leaders do not have much time for reflection. The spring session of the NATO Council, scheduled for early June, is to furnish an answer to the Soviet proposals. Incidentally, it will meet in Reykjavik—the city whose name has come to symbolize, after the memorable summit held there last autumn, mankind's hope for a nuclear-free world.

ALEXANDER TOLPEGIN
our own correspondent

Bonn

LEBANON

Who is obstructing a settlement?

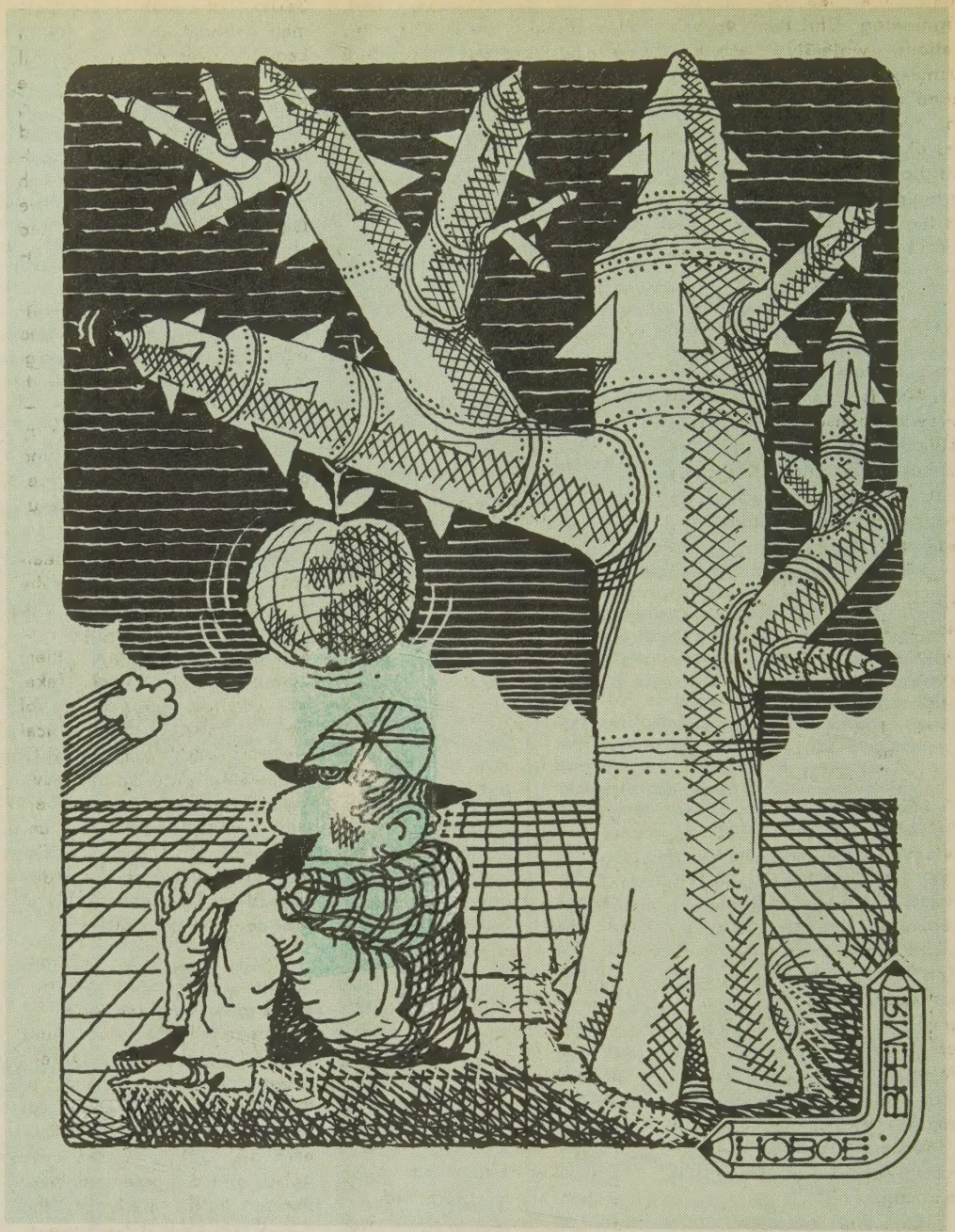
● LEBANON IS IN THE THROES OF A GOVERNMENT CRISIS.

Prime Minister Rachid Karame—one of the country's most respected and popular politicians, who has headed the government on a number of occasions—has resigned. The reason he has given for his resignation is the acute contradictions between the main political groups in the country.

However, President Gemayel, despite pressure from extremist right-wing Christian organizations, seems to be in no hurry to accept the Prime Minister's resignation, and the government is continuing to function. Moreover, the action taken by the Prime Minister has helped certain political leaders to appreciate the full delicacy and complexity of the situation and the need for greater unity in the face of the mounting threat of Israeli aggression and the possible partition of the country. At present the only open opposition to normalization and the search for ways of achieving national accord is coming from the Lebanese Forces, the Lebanese Front and other extremist right-wing Christian organizations.

Under the existing Constitution the President of Lebanon must be a Christian Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunnite Moslem, and the president of parliament a Shiite Moslem. Progressive forces in Lebanon have been insisting that this outdated system be abandoned, and a democratic reform of state power carried out. The situation is aggravated by the constant interference of Israel and its backer, the United States, and their attempts to whip up tension in relations between the different religious communities.

Interference by external forces is also largely responsible for the acuteness of the conflict between political organizations that share a common platform—the struggle to expel Israeli invaders from the country and ensure the territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon. The only quarters to gain anything from the internal strife are Tel Aviv and those who support it, Israeli agents, and the reactionaries who are working to get Lebanon partitioned into religious "cantons." Last February bitter clashes leading to considerable casualties flared up between the Shiite Amal movement and the left-wing organizations that form the bloc of National Patriotic Forces. At that time the Lebanese Forces kept to a policy of wait and see, watching the bloodshed in West Beirut from the sidelines. But as soon as Syria, at the request of the government, brought its troops into the city to normalize the situation and stop the blood-



The new Newton: "I think the ball's secure enough. So we've got nothing to worry about—unless it falls."

Cartoon by Vsevolod Arsenyev

shed, the leaders of the right-wing Christian organizations violently attacked Damascus and openly threatened to start a new stage of the civil war. Meanwhile leaders of the main Moslem organizations, as well as such prominent Christian politicians as the former President of the Republic Suleiman Frangié, favour looking for ways of reaching national accord and preserving Lebanon's territorial integrity and independence in cooperation with Syria. Nor is President Gemayel allowing himself to be blackmailed by the Lebanese Forces. This alone indicates that the political divisions in the country do not follow religious lines.

A couple of days ago a bomb exploded some 800 metres from the residence of Suleiman Frangié. Almost every day there is some kind of an explosion in West Beirut. Israel is preparing a new major invasion in the south of the country, shelling border settlements and bombing Palestinian camps. Tel Aviv and its agents are trying to prevent the stabilization of the situation in Lebanon, and are bent on rekindling the internal conflict. The Lebanese Forces are demanding that they be allowed to open their own international airport near the Halyath settlement, which they control. And if permission is refused they threaten to resume their shelling of Beirut airport to prevent it functioning.

Meanwhile President Gemayel is holding consultations with a view to finding a way out of the political deadlock. Lebanese-Syrian contacts are continuing. The situation in West Beirut is comparatively quiet and the checkpoints between the western and eastern sectors have been removed. But many political problems remain unsolved.

There is a difference of opinion about the Palestinian presence in Lebanon among the various organizations and groupings. Views also differ as to Syria's role in any settlement of the Lebanese crisis. Nevertheless, most observers believe there does exist real possibility of surmounting the differences and achieving national reconciliation, as long as these efforts are not hindered by Israel and its allies.

ANDREI OSTALSKI

WEST BERLIN

Celebrations with a "message"

● ALMOST THE ENTIRE WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT LED BY CHANCELLOR HELMUT KOHL ARRIVED IN WEST BERLIN, ALONG WITH THE MINISTER-PRESIDENTS OF THE FEDERAL LANDS AND MANY OTHER WEST GERMAN POLITICIANS, FOR THE OPENING OF THE CELEBRATIONS TO MARK THE CITY'S 750th ANNIVERSARY.

Pretentious speeches, utterly divorced from the objective political reality, marches and tunes that played on nationalist and chauvinist feelings, a 750-strong choir, decorations and diamonds galore.... The spectacular show took place against the background of a police battle with demonstrators in Kreuzberg and other districts of the city. The demonstrations by West Berliners were prompted by their desperate plight and their overall dissatisfaction with mass unemployment, the newly-announced increase in fares on public transport introduced by the Senate, and the forthcoming population census designed to identify dissidents.

But in the International Congress Centre, where the ceremonial opening of the festivities was held, the needs of the ordinary people did not figure in the minds of those present. West Berlin's Burgomaster Eberhard Diepgen (CDU) bandied such familiar phrases as "a united Berlin," "the unity of the German nation," and "the Berlin Land is part of the Federal Republic." The speech of the Federal German Chancellor, who seemed to have stepped into the role of host, abounded in nationalistic catch phrases that described the German question as open, and attacks on the German Democratic Republic.

It was obvious that a long-planned and well-prepared major political and ideological action had entered its decisive stage. Its purpose—using the city's anniversary as a pretext—was to try and get the international agreements determining the status of West Berlin revised.

A number of special features have been timed for the anniversary celebrations, and there is a certain amount of apprehension about them outside the city itself. Take, for instance, the opening of the German Historical Museum, a gift from the F.R.G. Permeated with the chauvinist, revanchist and pan-German spirit, it has been unfavourably received, specifically in Austria, which is disturbed by the propagation of the concept of Anschluss.

Those who prefer confrontation to fruitful cooperation pretend to be unaware of the existence of the September 3, 1971, quadripartite agreement on West Berlin or the Treaty on the bases of relations between the F.R.G. and the G.D.R. Under the quadripartite agreement West Berlin is not part of the F.R.G., nor can it be governed by it in the future. The conclusion of this agreement removed one of the most dangerous seats of tension in Europe and played a tremendous role in normalizing the situation with regard to West Berlin.

Commenting on the speech of the Burgomaster of West Berlin, a G.D.R. Foreign Ministry spokesman said: "Herr Diepgen misused the anniversary celebrations to make slanderous attacks on the German Democratic Republic and has thus wrecked the basis for joint celebrations of the 750th anniversary. In view of these actions, which have been censured by the public in the German Democratic Republic and elsewhere, his participation in celebrations in the capital of the German Democratic Republic is at present clearly out of the question."

It is high time right-wing circles in the F.R.G. and West Berlin gave up their attempts to use Berlin's anniversary for provocative political purposes. It is in the interests of Europe and the world to have a balanced system of agreements that clearly regulate the situation in a place where developments two to three decades ago brought mankind to the brink of war.

EVGENY BOGOMOLOV

SOUTH AFRICA

After the elections

● THE POLITICAL FORCES IN SOUTH AFRICA WHO SEEK TO SAVE THE RACIST REGIME ARE NOW CLOSING RANKS.

This was shown clearly by the elections to the "white" house of parliament on May 6. It was a "whites only" election and they cast their votes in favour of the parties with racist ideologies—the ruling Nationalist Party, which increased its seats in parliament from 116 to 123, and the extreme right-wing Conservative Party, which increased its representation from 16 to 22. At the same time the Progressive Federal Party, which demands the abolition of the apartheid system, lost several votes.

The election results clearly reveal a shift to the right in the white electorate. Its importance should not, however, be overestimated, as no radical changes have taken place in the balance of forces in parliament. Presumably,

President Pieter Botha cannot be pleased with the outcome: he was clearly hoping for more, namely, the total defeat of his opponents, both right- and left-wing. Both had bitterly criticized him: the right for "weakness" in dealing with the African National Congress (ANC), and the Liberals for refusing to legalize the ANC and negotiate with it.

During the election campaign the government directed its main attacks against the Progressive Federal Party. It sought to persuade the electorate that a vote cast for the PFP would be tantamount to a vote for the ANC. One of their election posters read: "Better death than a vote for the ANC. But then why vote for the Progressive Federal Party?" That poster perfectly illustrated Botha's election slogan: "Either we or the ANC."

By facing the electorate with such a choice, the government and extreme right-wing parties lent the elections a definite slant and colouring. If during the previous election campaign it was the economic, social and other problems besetting the white community that formed the focal point, this time all that was swept aside. The focus was exclusively on apartheid and its future, how to react to the demands of the African majority for equality, and how to treat the ANC.

The problems the racist leaders themselves made the focal point of the election campaign will have to be resolved. There is no getting away from that. True, after the votes were counted Botha declared that his policy would remain unchanged. He is determined to keep Africans out of the running of the country and pledged to suppress the ANC and any other organizations that seek to change the existing status quo.

YURI BOCHKARYOV

JAPAN

The death of an artist

● THE DEATH HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED IN TOKYO OF THE ARTIST SADAMICHI HIRASAWA, WORLD-FAMOUS NOT FOR HIS PICTURES BUT FOR 32 YEARS ON DEATH ROW.

Though Hirasawa was condemned to death in May 1955 for the premeditated murder of 12 people, none of the justice ministers since then was able to take the decision to have the sentence carried out. On the other hand, none could bring themselves to release the artist.

On January 26, 1948, a middle-aged man knocked on the door of a Tejkoku Bank. The office was about to close, but the man, who introduced himself as a state health inspector, was allowed to enter. He explained that as dysentery was rife, the staff had to be inoculated. He told all 16 office clerks to take what he called an antidote to dysentery. Next he gave them another pill that was supposed to neutralize the effects. The poison took effect in some 3-4 minutes and 12 of the 16 died.

The crime had stunned Japan. Seven months later the police apprehended Hirasawa, an artist who was found to have a suspiciously large amount of cash in his possession and who shortly before his arrest had deposited a considerable sum in an account under a fictitious name.

He pleaded not guilty, indeed the Japanese public has always entertained serious doubts as to whether he was the real murderer. The Save Hirasawa association was set up, and claimed that, in the first place, the prosecution had no direct evidence and that, secondly, Hirasawa could not have murdered the bank clerks as he had not had access to the poison used and did not know what it was for.

Over the last few years documents have come to light clearly indicating that the Japanese police knew who the real murderer was. An American researcher has made public a secret letter, dated 1948, from Jiro Fujita, the chief Japanese investigator. It told Americans that the poison used had been devised in the laboratories of the imperial army and had been "handled" by members of General Shiro Ishii's detachment 731, which was preparing for germ warfare against China and the Soviet Union.

The real murderer had with him a stock of acetoncyanhydride, known in army jargon as "nitrile." The general staff had ordered the poison to be developed at imperial army's Ninth Technical Research Institute. "Nitrile" is a poison that acts only several minutes after being administered to delay initial symptoms in collective suicide or mass murder. Which is exactly what happened in the Tejkoku Bank.

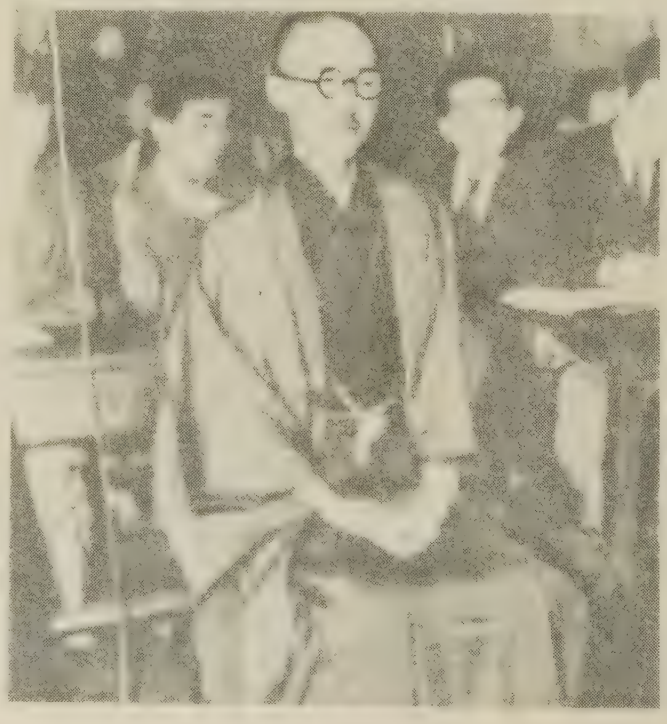
Japanese experts are of the view that only people who had handled this poison could have known anything about it. General Shiro Ishii had provided American intelligence with a list of the names of those on the staff of detachment 731. By offering to cooperate, he thus saved himself from going before the Tokyo war crimes tribunal. Though it would have been simple enough to have traced the real killer on the basis of the list in their possession, General MacArthur's staff officers had considerations other than justice in mind.

As new types of chemical and bacteriological weapons were being developed at Fort Detrick in the U.S., the Americans believed the expertise of the Japanese specialists to be of priceless value, so they had no intention of sacrificing either General Ishii or any of his subordinates. The Japanese police were ordered to produce a culprit, which they did.

LEONID MLECHIN

Sadamichi Hirasawa in the dock: despite public protest and the arguments of his defence counsels he was sentenced to death.

From the International Herald Tribune (U.S.)



Attacks from within, pressure from without

From our own correspondent
LEONID ZHEGALOV

For weeks now the Indian ship of state is being steered by someone into the middle of a sort of Bermuda Triangle whose political whirlpools threaten to drag it into the vortex of a dangerous crisis.

Under pressure from the opposition, the debate in the Indian parliament on the draft of the budget for the next fiscal year has been postponed and discussion of the government programmes for improving the plight of the poorest sections of the population has been suspended. A topical public discussion on the unity of the nation and of all its religious communities has been cut short. The fact of U.S. warships led by the Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier having called at Pakistan's port of Karachi in mid-April—a graphic confirmation of the Washington-Islamabad military axis materializing—has passed almost unnoticed. Many plans for India's participation in international activities have been relegated to the background.

Instead, the political opposition and part of the press have all but called the competence of the present national leadership in question. The political opponents of the ruling Indian National Congress (I) party have mounted a frontal attack on the central government and its head Rajiv Gandhi.

"Dyer" and "reliance"

What is happening? There is no simple answer to this question because events are occurring as in some ingenious detective story in which the plot unfolds in a kaleidoscopic succession of patterns, one more confusing than the other.

In any case the roots of the present crisis situation in the country should, evidently, be sought in the economic basis of the Indian bourgeois state, for what is in question above all is a conflict between the financial and business interests of two rival monopoly groups of private capital.

Driving into practically any Indian city one finds that the billboards of the powerful textile concern Bombay Dyeing eclipse the municipal "Welcome" signs. Foreigners arriving at the Delhi international airport discover at once that the "dyers" have appropriated the right to speak on behalf of the country: their advertisement featuring the traditional Indian greeting—palms pressed together—practically overhangs the passport control desks.

The "dyers'" rival, Reliance, another giant textile conglomerate, is no less prominently represented. The arrogance of this concern has gone so far that in one of its ads it calls itself "a prop of the nation." At any rate, local informed quarters say that Reliance is one of the financial props of the ruling party.

Last year the Bombay "dyers" set out to undermine the reputation of their rival. They hatched a plan to expose alleged illegal foreign currency deposits by Reliance in Swiss and some other foreign banks. In order to give wide publicity to the "findings" of their investigation, the "dyers" entered into a compact with the powerful Indian R.N. Goenka newspaper trust, whose principal publication, the newspaper Indian Express, pursues an anti-Congress policy. The owner of the newspaper trust sent his consultant, Indian Express news analyst S. Gurumurthy, to the United States.

A clue to the character of this man is afforded by the fact, which most local and Western newsmen have passed over in silence, that Gurumurthy has long been an active member of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh—the National Union of Volunteers), a Hindu ultrachauvinistic paramilitary organization which preaches the superiority of Hinduism over other religions, stands for the "purity of the Hindu race," and calls for cleansing the country of "aliens."

In the U.S., S. Gurumurthy, possibly in the context of undercover ties between the RSS and its American partners, contacted the Fairfax private detective agency which has close connections with the FBI and the CIA. Fairfax agents went to Switzerland where they got on the track of illegal financial operations of the Reliance concern and backed up the evidence they had unearthed with secret Indian government documents obtained by some mysterious means. All of which was played up to the full by S. Gurumurthy in the Indian Express.

Fairfax sleuths

There is nothing unusual about the above story—on the face of it, it is just another clash between rival monopolies. But under the impact of subsequent developments it acquired a somewhat different dimension. It so happened that the independent investigation undertaken by S. Gurumurthy, in league with Fairfax, did not objectively conflict with the policy of the Rajiv Gandhi government which has declared an uncompromising war on the illegal foreign currency operations of

The chiefs of the two feuding textile concerns Bombay Dyeing and Reliance care nothing for national interests.

Both RSS and Washington are happy with S. Gurumurthy (right).

Indian companies. The Indian Express revelations, therefore, made a favourable impression on the then Minister of Finance Vishwanath Pratap Singh, who was greatly concerned about the growing outflow of currency from India. The minister's mistake, however, was that, in setting out to investigate the foreign activity of some 15 Indian firms, he employed the services not of the competent Indian bodies, but, at Gurumurthy's advice, it is said, of the American Fairfax agency which had supposedly "proved its worth." In doing so, the minister overlooked Fairfax's connections with the CIA—a fact of no little importance considering that the Rajiv Gandhi government's foreign policy has long been a thorn in the side of the U.S. administration.

It is hence not surprising that Fairfax set to work with an unwarranted zeal far exceeding the bounds of the investigation proper. Its agents began probing for information about Rajiv Gandhi's closest associates and about the sources of the revenue of the ruling Indian National Congress (I) party. And such information in any bourgeois state—India is no exception—is sacrosanct, a carefully guarded secret from outsiders.

The use of the Fairfax detective agency became public knowledge in India. Ignoring the supreme national interests of the country, the opposition pressed for the announcement in parliament of the results of the investigation in order to use them against the ruling party. The Congress leadership regarded the whole affair as an attempt on the part of both internal political opponents and foreign forces hostile to India to sow dissension in the INC (I), and to undermine the position of the Prime Minister himself. At the end of January it was announced in Delhi that V.P. Singh was being transferred from the post of Minister of Finance to that of Minister of Defence. Thus the sincerity of his motives was not questioned.

Meanwhile, the Indian Express moved on from attacks on Reliance to an offensive against the Congress government, operating moreover with secret government documents doubtless obtained with the help of Fairfax agents. This gave the authorities justification in mid-March for searching the home of the publisher R.N. Goenka and arresting S. Gurumurthy (he was subsequently released on bail). The following day the newspaper published what is described as a copy of a letter from the Indian President Zail Singh to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, rebuking him for not keeping the head of the state informed of the actions of the cabinet as is called for by the Constitution. Since the President did not deny the letter had been sent, it may be assumed that it had been. Here is an interesting sidelight: according to well-informed sources, the draft of the letter had been prepared by R.N. Goenka, possibly with the assistance of S. Gurumurthy. That completed the first phase of the crisis situation created by "well-wishers" from Fairfax.

Another try

Shortly after taking up the post of Minister of Defence, V.P. Singh announced that a special commission was being set up to inquire into the circumstances of the conclusion of a government contract for the delivery of submarines to India from the F.R.G. The new minister had learned that when the contract was signed some Indian government official had received a large sum of money as commission. Whether this was so or not could be established only by a concrete investigation, but it is felt here that by his public announcement of the inquiry before any proof had been obtained, the minister had cast a shadow over the entire cabinet.

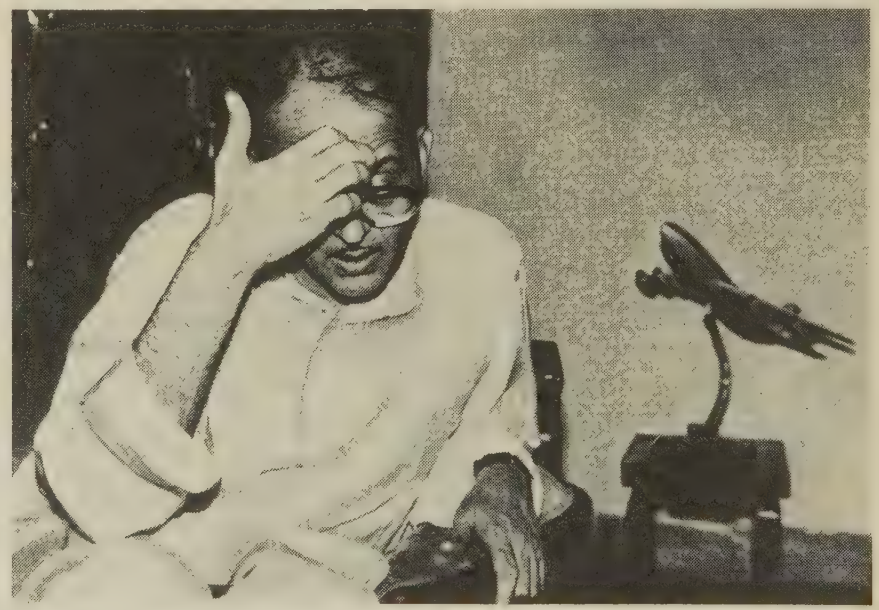
As a matter of fact the announcement came at an extremely inauspicious moment. The opposition was still fanning the smouldering embers of the previous two affairs—the Fairfax scandal and the presidential letter incident. The members of the parliamentary Congress party were of the unanimous opinion that V.P. Singh had tried to raise his own stocks at the expense of the reputation of the INC (I), its government and the Prime Minister. Thirty of them issued a statement accusing the Minister of Defence of attempting a quiet takeover under cover of talk about morality.

The prominent Indian journalist R.K. Mishra believes that the internal reactionaries and foreign imperialist forces had succeeded in "manipulating" Singh's desire to pose as an uncompromising fighter against corruption and had lured him into the trap laid for the Gandhi government's independent foreign policy. V.P. Singh resigned.

It would have seemed that the peak of tension had been reached. However, in the second half of April the Stockholm radio reported that during the conclusion of a contract with the Swedish Bofors firm for the delivery to India of a consignment of howitzers, some Indian intermediary representing government interests had pocketed a large commission. Someone appears to be stubbornly bent on involving India in one scandal after another! In this connection Rajiv Gandhi stated that the late Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme had assured him personally that no intermediary had been party to the howitzer deal. "And when a Prime Minister assures us we have to accept it," Gandhi said.

It is assumed here that in the Bofors case someone wanted to kill two birds with one stone. First, to discredit the Rajiv Gandhi government, and, second, to punish Sweden for pursuing a neutral policy, for being a member, with India, of the Delhi Six which strongly advocate nuclear disarmament. And, finally, to penalize the Bofors firm for competing with the traditional Western arms suppliers.

In the meantime, bourgeois opposition at home started putting pressure on the Indian President to dismiss Rajiv Gandhi or to call pre-term



Former Finance and Defence Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh.

parliamentary elections. The President reacted to this by saying, early this May, that he had no intention of relieving the Prime Minister of his post.

No sooner had the crisis shown signs of abating, than Washington tried to fan it again. In an interview given to the Washington correspondent of the Indian newspaper the Statesman (published in its May 8 issue) Michael Hershman, the Fairfax agency chief, off-handedly accused the Indian leadership of corruption without bothering to adduce any proof, and threatened to make certain "revelations." Now it is clearer than ever, said Anand Sharma, a prominent Indian MP, that behind all this there is a thoroughly orchestrated conspiracy to discredit the Indian government and create an atmosphere of uncertainty in the country.

However that may be, the Indian government has been having it hard for a long time. Two methods of attack are being used against it. One is the undercover machinations begun by the Fairfax crowd. The other is direct pressure exerted by Washington, expressed in the recent U.S. Congress decision to cut financial aid to India in the coming fiscal year by 30 per cent. Even the ordinarily imperturbable Delhi news analyst Girilal Jain has described this decision as final evidence that the "honeymoon" in U.S.-Indian relations is over.

Was there a "honeymoon"?

On entering office in late 1984, Rajiv Gandhi announced his intention to pursue a resolute policy of modernization through the utilization of the latest technology. Where was this technology to be obtained? Only in the U.S., of course, was Washington's arrogant belief. The White House saw in Rajiv Gandhi's policy of modernization a convenient opportunity to exert pressure on Delhi for its own ends. There was even talk in Washington of a coming "honeymoon" in relations with the young Prime Minister.

But the government headed by Rajiv Gandhi did not retreat from the independent national course followed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. America's disappointment at such a state of affairs soon turned to annoyance. The U.S. refused to deliver supercomputers to India, it began counting how many times India had not voted with the U.S. in the United Nations, and at the same time it continued generously to arm neighbouring Pakistan.

As Rajiv Gandhi said at a meeting of the INC (I) parliamentary party, India was having to pay for its independent foreign policy. The country, he said, was being subjected to the same pressure as Chile under President Salvador Allende.

While pouring oil on the flames of the crisis in India, the U.S. is impatient to further rearm Pakistan and build up tension on India's borders. Under the circumstances, on May 7, the government of India cancelled earlier arrangements for the Indian Foreign Minister's visit to the United States.

Thus, instead of the "honeymoon" that never was there is the pressuring of a great Asian state, attempts to split the ruling party, to discredit the government, and weaken the position of the Prime Minister himself. And all because the Indian government is pursuing an anti-imperialist policy, because it actively supports the liberation struggle of the peoples, and advances constructive initiatives in the sphere of disarmament.

In these circumstances, particular importance attaches to the problem of national unity of India, which the bourgeois opposition appears ready to sacrifice to its internal political interests of the moment. The left opposition, which at first all but joined in the anti-government chorus, is now distancing itself from the attacks on the INC (I), regarding that party as a guarantee of the preservation of the anti-imperialist orientation of foreign policy. At the present time members of the left forces are accusing the bourgeois opposition parties of trying to impose a right-wing alternative on the country by their anti-Congress onslaught. Such an alternative would suit the book of the internal opponents of the Jawaharlal Nehru-Indira Gandhi policy and the imperialist enemies of Indian independence.

"No objective observer of the current scene can fail to notice," the Times of India commented, "the grim treats with which India is sought to be hemmed in. In the circumstances, any campaign to tarnish the image of the leadership, destroy its moral authority and thus generate in the country a mood of doom can only comfort those who do not wish India well."

Delhi, May

RIPOSTE

Props for SDI

The United States and its European allies are planning to put into effect a European Defence Initiative (EDI) no matter what the outcome of the American-Soviet talks on Euromissiles.

This was announced in Brussels by a senior American official at NATO headquarters. Recalling that the proposal for EDI had originally been put forward with U.S. backing by the West German Defence Minister Manfred Wörner back in March 1985, the American official underlined that Washington has its own plans for the programme. The idea was that EDI would be integrated with the American anti-ballistic missile system and become the front line of the United States' strategic defence. With this in mind, it was planned to use research and development within the framework of EDI to develop and test SDI components, as the West European countries were not signatories to the ABM treaty. In his opinion, this would make it possible to shift part of the SDI expenses onto the shoulders of the West Europeans, an extremely important factor as Congress was imposing restrictions on allocations for the programme. The man in charge of the programme, General James Abrahamson, is known to have spoken on many occasions of the possibility of utilizing work for a Euro-ABM to build up an American anti-missile defence system.

However, as the American frankly admitted, serious problems have cropped up of which they prefer to say nothing at the present stage. Both the Pentagon and NATO have experienced serious concern at the West European public's lack of enthusiasm for EDI. Now the generals' anxieties have increased. For the prospect of implementing "the double zero option" on Euromissiles might not only strip the concept of EDI of any attractiveness in the eyes of West Europeans, but also deprive it of any sense.

In these circumstances, NATO circles intend to act more energetically to remove the doubts about the feasibility of EDI that still persist in some European circles. It is proposed to dispatch high-ranking envoys to a number of West European capitals, and hold a number of closed seminars in NATO air defence committee and the SDI Organization. There is also a possibility that a special coordinator will be appointed by agreement between the Pentagon and NATO headquarters. High hopes are being pinned on backing from business circles in the United States and Western Europe, which stand to gain from the implementation of the expensive project.

MIKHAIL PUTINKOVSKY

The Lyons trial opens at last

It was a long-awaited day. It had been looked forward to since the summer of 1942 when Obersturmfuehrer Klaus Barbie, later promoted to Hauptsturmfuehrer, the new chief of the 4th division of the SS security service, made his first appearance in the three-storey mansion in Berthelot Street, Lyons. It had been looked forward to by Resistance fighters, whose brothers and sisters fell victim to the butcher of Lyons.

After the war, members of the Lyons military tribunal waited and waited for that day, but to no avail. One can imagine the tribunal marshal calling out, in accordance with legal procedure: "Defendant Barbie!"

The call remained unanswered. Who was to answer it if war criminal Barbie was safe in Bolivia, where his solicitous American benefactors had taken him. It was only three decades later that the long-awaited trial opened in Lyons on May 11, 1987.

On that day the court officials, newsmen and the members of the public who had gathered in Lyon's Palace of Justice were in for a surprise.

Asked by Judge André Cerdini, as a matter of protocol, what his name, place of birth and residence, and profession were, the defendant replied:

"Klaus Altmann, born in Bad Godesberg, resident of La Paz, a businessman."

Contrary to strict rules, the audience burst into exclamations of astonishment.

"Am I to understand that you are not Klaus Barbie?"

"I am Altmann, a Bolivian citizen since 1951."

"Then why did you admit to being named Klaus Barbie before?" a lawyer representing the interests of Resistance fighters asked, unable to restrain himself.

"I do not answer such questions," the Hauptsturmfuehrer snapped.

Whom was the defendant trying to fool here in Lyons, the true capital of the French Resistance movement? This haggard and pallid man with deep-sunken eyes must have devised his own line of action at the trial.

Political passions which have calmed down somewhat over the four years of preparations for the Barbie trial are running high again. A few days before the trial opened, the extreme-right held meetings in various parts of the country openly calling in question the need for the trial and its usefulness for any purpose. In Lyons proper, two manifestations were held—one by lawyers representing the interests of Resistance fighters, who paid tribute to the memory of the victims of nazism; and the other, by the apologists of Marshal Pétain—"the gravedigger of France"—who chanted neonazi slogans. The clash is on.

On the opening day of the trial, a Paris lawyer showed me a letter Lise Lesèvre, one of Barbie's victims, had received on May 8. A scrap of paper, daubed with a swastika, said: "Those were good times!" We know that "those times" still have their nostalgic admirers. But the fact that they have no scruples about raising their voice lends special importance to the Barbie trial as a means of telling the whole truth about the past.

"We attach enormous, truly extraordinary importance to the Lyons trial," Senator Charles Lederman, a well-known lawyer and public figure, and active Resistance fighter, told me not long before the opening of the trial, "because it must be a symbol of inevitable retribution for nazi outrages. It is intended to show that the nazi barbarians and all those who aided and abetted their crimes are to be held responsible. Our young people must learn the truth about the occupation because some people here are calling even undeniably heinous crimes into question. Some even profess an ideology not far removed from nazism.

"Incidentally, I lived near Lyons during the occupation, until 1943. We already knew then that the local Gestapo was distinguished for its special cruelty. It wasn't only a question of Barbie himself but also of the system he embodied. This system is to stand trial in the Lyons Palace of Justice."

Indeed it is not only Barbie who is being tried in Lyons but the nazi system that produced him—and the system that enabled him to evade punishment for as long as 45 years. The former system has been wiped off the face of earth, but as for the latter system....

The Hamburg Stern asked American lawyer, John Loftus, who had written an exposé of the CIA using nazi criminals, to trace Barbie's way into the Agency. Loftus dug into the archives and found out that Western secret services had a long record of recruiting ex-SS men. Picked up by the British intelligence service first, Barbie later transferred to the notorious Gehlen organization which worked for the Americans, and was finally taken on by the American CIC counterintelligence body.

What about other war criminals employed by new masters? Some of my colleagues who have come to Lyons for the trial are fresh from Israel, where another hangman, Ivan Demyanyuk, is on trial. Why did it take so long to bring him to justice? Because the butcher of the Treblinka, Maidanek and Sobibor concentration camps had found refuge in the United States. True, after lengthy procrastination, he was stripped of his American citizenship and deported to Israel, which had demanded his extradition.

"How is the trial going?"

"Tardily," as an F.R.G. colleague put it. "Demyanyuk's American lawyer is trying to contest an important piece of material evidence—the hangman's concentration camp identity card—on the grounds that it was found in archives and submitted to court by the Soviet Procurator's Office."

Now that the court has pronounced the document authentic there has arisen another, truly casuistic, problem. As they extradited Demyanyuk to Israel, the American authorities stipulated that he would be tried for the outrages he had committed in Maidanek. Most of the evidence submitted to the court has to do with the Sobibor camp, however. Now the judges are racking their brains for a way out of the situation.

Some trials have yet to start. Before leaving Moscow for Lyons I had a talk at the U.S.S.R. Procurator's Office with Natalya Kolesnikova, who was just back from Costa Rica. War criminal Bogdan

Kozy, whose extradition the Soviet Union is demanding, has found refuge in that country (see New Times No. 10, 1987). Recently the court of Alajuela city ruled that Kozy be turned over to the Soviet judicial bodies.

"Let us hope this will not take them as long as it has taken the American authorities—from 1961, when we made our first application, till 1987—to extradite Karl Linnas, a butcher at the Tartu concentration camp," Natalya Kolesnikova concluded.

As I talked with veteran anti-nazi fighters who had come to Lyons I sensed, almost physically, the organic link between the past and the present. The trial is expected to last for about two months. Its distinguishing feature is that the case for the prosecution is being brought—besides the Public Prosecutor—by many national and international organizations of Resistance fighters and public associations, as well as individuals—a total of over a hundred. Their interests are represented in court by more than 50 lawyers. Even the very indictment is unusual: it was compiled partly by the Rhône Department judicial authorities, partly by the Paris Court of Appeal which has taken legal action on additional suits brought by Resistance fighters against Barbie. The trial is being video-taped for the first time ever in French legal history. The tape is to be played back not earlier than 2007, and telecast only in 2037.

The great international importance of the Lyons trial is beyond doubt. The French were not Barbie's only victims. English POWs and Soviet citizens who found themselves in France also suffered at his hands.

It is still to be established whether Barbie was ever in the occupied territory of the Soviet Union. In an interview he gave in Bolivia he answered the question in the affirmative. In another interview he specified that he had served in the 126th Infantry Division. Such a division did exist: it invaded our country in the northwest as part of the 10th Infantry Corps of the 16th German army and advanced as far as Staraya Russa by way of Daugavpils and Opochka. The division was followed by the sinister Einsatzgruppe A that annihilated 240,000 Soviet citizens in 1941. Was Klaus Barbie in its ranks? The answer will probably emerge in the course of the trial that has just started.

LEV BEZYMENSKY
our special correspondent

Lyons, May 12

IN RETROSPECT

The end of Operation Overflight

On May 1, 1960, a plane without identification markings took off from a U.S. air base near Peshawar, Pakistan. It was to have flown over Soviet territory and landed in Norway. At an altitude of 20,000 metres it crossed the Soviet air border. Some time later, the plane was downed near Sverdlovsk. Its pilot, who had managed to bale out, was arrested. He turned out to be Francis Gary Powers, a U.S. citizen.

That Powers belonged to the U.S. Air Force was evidenced by his identity card No. AF 1 288068 bearing a Pentagon stamp with the words "Defence Department, United States of America."

The American pilot testified that under a contract with the CIA he worked in a special U.S. Air Force unit engaged in aerial reconnaissance. His assignment was to photograph various installations in the territory of the U.S.S.R.

On May 3, Washington—on the assumption that the pilot had destroyed the plane and committed suicide, as he had been instructed to do in an emergency—published a statement reporting the disappearance of a civilian-piloted NASA plane on an atmospheric research and air sampling mission.

On May 5, the Soviet Union reported having shot down an American warplane in Soviet airspace on May 1.

Commenting on this report in line with the U.S. government's initial statement, a U.S. State Department spokesman "admitted" on the same day that an American research plane engaged in atmospheric studies near the Soviet-Turkish border was missing. True, the State Department did not rule out the possibility of the pilot having lost consciousness owing to trouble in the oxygen supply system and violated the Soviet air border by chance.

On May 6, the U.S. embassy in the U.S.S.R. handed the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs a note saying that the violation of the Soviet border had been unpremeditated.

On May 7, the Soviet press carried detailed information on the shot down plane and a testimony by the pilot Francis Gary Powers.

On the same day, Washington had to own up to the intelligence nature of the flight and even to the fact that the U-2 plane had been designed and built by Lockheed specifically to carry out such missions. The administration in Washington, however, persisted in denying having sanctioned the flight.

On May 11, President Dwight Eisenhower himself was finally compelled to admit that Operation Overflight had been conducted with his knowledge and under his personal supervision.

The provocative actions by U.S. militarist circles aggravated relations between the two countries to the point of frustrating an important summit meeting scheduled to have taken place at the end of May 1960.

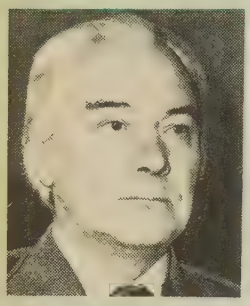
"Past and present American foreign policy," the British authors Frederick Muscat and Franco Remoro point out in their book "A Matter of Interest," "has amply demonstrated that the technique of the Big Lie has been elevated to the status of state doctrine." The Irangate scandal now raging in Washington has borne this out.

E. A.

"Our press has lately been publishing tables of the respective armaments of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. In my opinion, even a cursory analysis is enough to show that there can be no question of approximate parity. The United States, as I see it, is much better armed than we are. So why do we continue to maintain that there is parity between our two countries!

MIKHAIL MEKOV
Belgorod Region, U.S.S.R.

TAKING UP A POINT



LEV SEMEIKO, leading researcher at the Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada Studies of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, replies:

Concerning parity

The question is of great importance in principle. Because if we agree with the above conclusion (that there is no strategic parity), then it is time to sound the alarm. It is time quickly to adopt military programmes to restore the strategic balance.

However, let us first take another look at the figures for the strategic nuclear arms of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. as of January 1 of this year. Here are these figures: intercontinental ballistic missile (IBM) launchers—the U.S.S.R., 1,398, the U.S., 1,016; IBM launchers and ballistic missiles on submarines—2,320 and 1,688, respectively. In other words, the Soviet Union has more strategic missile launchers than the United States. The United States, however, has more heavy bombers—522 to our 164. Therefore, there are 2,484 Soviet strategic carriers to America's 2,210. The advantage, as you see, is ours. But the U.S. has the advantage when it comes to the number of nuclear warheads on these carriers—15,000 to our approximately 10,000. This numerical superiority is, bluntly speaking, much greater than ours is in carriers. That is probably what prompted the conclusion that strategically the Soviet Union was lagging behind.

But this is a mistaken conclusion. When comparing the overall strength of the armaments or armed forces of the two sides you cannot judge simply by looking at isolated figures and disregarding the picture as a whole. Incidentally, Lenin pointed that out in his article "Statistics and Sociology": "The most widely used, and most fallacious, method in the realm of social phenomena is to tear out **individual** minor facts and juggle with examples. Selecting chance examples presents no difficulty at all, but is of no value, or of purely negative value, for in each individual case everything hinges on the historically concrete situation. Facts, if we take them in their **entirety**, in their **interconnection**, are not only stubborn things, but undoubtedly proof-bearing things." This is the method used by historical materialism.

Applying this principle to the balance of strategic nuclear armaments, one has to take into account not only the number of carriers and warheads, but also certain other factors. Specifically, the yield of the nuclear warheads, their accuracy, the quality of the carriers (the total launch weight, missile launch weight, bomb payload, the bombers' range and altitude, their ability to penetrate defence systems, their survivability), the reliability of the nuclear payload and a number of other parameters. Nor can one disregard military-geographic and other factors, including, of course, the strategies of the two sides. It is one thing when a country is preparing to deliver a first strike, and quite another when it is geared solely to retaliation.

A simple and, in essence, a mechanical comparison of the separate figures on the strength of the strategic nuclear armaments is incorrect, not least because the importance of the different figures is incommensurate. Moreover, the choice of these figures can be varied—they can be the most "advantageous" or the most "disadvantageous," depending on what the comparison sets out to prove. But this is not a scientific, objective approach. The assessment has to be complete.

Therefore it is not the separate figures on the correlation of strategic nuclear forces that are all-important, but the correlation of the military potential of these forces. In other words, the final conclusions can be drawn only after assessing the overall picture, which includes all the elements of the strategic forces and their characteristics.

You will agree that only experts can carry out the gigantic task of assessing all aspects that make up the strategic balance. And if our General Staff officially states that the strategic balance between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. is a reality—why not believe it? Such statements are made with full responsibility. There would be too high a price to pay for any mistake—it could result in catastrophe.

However, even a layman can make his own calculations. Everyone, presumably, realizes that no matter how strong a nuclear attack is made against our country, the retaliatory strike would destroy America as a 20th-century state. No American first strike is capable of putting out of action all our missiles, bombers, and submarines on the high seas. Therefore the retaliation would be devastating. That is why it doesn't matter in principle whether the two sides have the ability to destroy each other 10 or, say, 20 times over, and why it is not a decisive factor that the United States has half again as many strategic nuclear warheads as we do, or that we have more strategic carriers than they do.

It therefore cannot be considered reasonable deliberately to exaggerate the importance of the disproportion in one type of armament or another for political purposes. Yet from time to time in the United States the alarm is sounded that the Soviet Union has achieved strategic superiority, as it has more intercontinental missiles and they can carry greater payloads. This is done for purely political purposes. And it is a typical case of the using of "individual facts" that Lenin mentioned.

It should be said that you can never achieve the precise balance that a chemist's scales requires, if only because the two sides had, have and will continue to have systems of armaments that differ in their para-

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OPINIONS

There's only one way

I often recall my grandfather, who fought in Europe during the past war. I specially remember him telling me about the army songs Russians and Americans sang during the Elbe linkup. They understood each other well and didn't need an interpreter. It was a fine time; no wonder my grandfather never forgot the linkup. Russians and Americans had all been doing the same job; their's was real soldiers' brotherhood.

The cold war undermined the trust and confidence between us, while the nuclear arms race, which I myself see escalating, is leading us up a blind alley from which there is only one way out alive, through understanding and détente.

Has the Elbe linkup of April 1945, when Soviet and American soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder, really been forgotten? I simply don't believe anyone in your country would want to fight us. Nor do Americans want to fight. May the memory of that great joint victory over our common enemy help the leaders of our two countries today to forget all their complaints and recriminations in the face of global disaster. May it help the human race achieve prosperity and peace.

CHARLES MacPHERSON
Boston, U.S.

A friendship 51 years old

I became your good friend in 1936, when the Soviet Union backed Republican Spain. The brightest memory in all my 65 years is that of the Red Army's stonewall defence of Stalingrad. I remember how we used to listen with bated breath to the daily wireless communiqués from Moscow. For my generation that city will always be associated with the victory over fascism.

SEAN O'KELLY
Dublin, Ireland

FOLLOW-UP

He must get his deserts

Lev Bezymensky's report "The Third Life of the Butcher of Lyons," which I read in your issue No. 10 for this year, was a shocking reminder that nazi atrocities during the last war outdid the barbarity of the Middle Ages.

One such atrocity was the massacre of French Resistance fighters in Dachau in the summer of 1944.

The captured Frenchmen were transported by rail without food or water. When the death train arrived at the concentration camp, most of the prisoners were dead. However, not only dead bodies, but also some who were in their extremity were thrown into the incinerators. This atrocity was perpetrated by Klaus Barbie and other war criminals of his ilk. More than 40 years have passed since then. Now that Barbie is on trial in France, I say on behalf of all honest men and women that the judges trying the butcher of Lyons should be fair but merciless. The memory of the victims of fascism cries out for justice, as do we all.

I. GORDEYEV
Tselinograd Region,
U.S.S.R.

A READER'S CONTRIBUTION

Yuri Korolyov, a reader from Nikolayev in the southern Ukraine, has called his photograph "Women of Togo."

A FLAT IN A YEAR, AND MORE...

ALEXANDER RADOV

Even if I were to write a whole detailed novel about them, I'm sure my readers would think that I was fooling them and looking at things through rose-coloured spectacles. Certainly, it's too good to be true, as if one were dealing not with ordinary human beings, but with exceptional ones. And, mind you, not two or three, but, today, more than 3,000.

They belong to the youth housing complex, the Russian initials for which are MZK. The very name seems to promise that it will never grow old. And that is really so, because the tenants are full of energy and enthusiasm. The whole life of this small settlement on the outskirts of the city of Sverdlovsk in the Urals is unmarred by "deviations," although there is plenty in neighbouring houses—drunks, roughmouths, rebellious teenagers and divorces. But at the MZK everything is as the doctor and moralist order. Why?

To be frank, it wasn't because they were having a good time of it. Only a dozen years ago or so the present residents were housed more often than not in hostels that were hardly appropriate for married life, or rented rooms. As for flats of their own, they were on the trade union waiting lists at their respective places of work, which could mean a wait of anything from eight to twelve years.

In a quandary like this, some young people sought "alternative" unearned sources of revenue to buy a flat in a housing cooperative. Others, scrounged off parents. However, that would not do for the initiators of the Sverdlovsk MZK. They had to look for a different solution. Here the student building squads on which as Polytechnic students they had spent their summers came in useful. On the building squads they realized that if they wanted to, and if they learned the ropes, they could build a block of flats. Later on, already graduated, they were sure they could do just that, and even build big blocks comprising hundreds of flats. It seemed particularly feasible when they found that young people living in the suburban town of Kaliningrad near Moscow had already done so. They rushed off to have a look and saw much that was admirable. However, as there were some things they didn't like, they decided to go about it in their own way.

Team spirit

Though they appeared to have got off to a good start, on quite a number of occasions they ran into a blank wall and were on the point of giving it all up. However, they plucked up their courage and started again, mostly relying upon the team spirit they had developed in the building squads, and thanks to their leader, the obstinate, purposeful physicist Evgeny Korolyov. However, he wouldn't have managed on his own without such enthusiastic associates as economist Galina Karelova, chemist Vladimir Manov, metallurgist Alexander Vinitsky, architect Sergei Lyzhin, and engineer Vyacheslav Myakotin. Working in concert, they sought to surprise all around, which is why they were not interested in putting up something provisional; nor did they try to simplify in order to achieve their objective more easily. What they wanted was not one house, but a whole neighbourhood unit, for the flat was not what mattered most. There had also to be all the facilities that would help make life smoother. This concerned the children most. Bricks and mortar were not enough. What they had to build was a true community relationship.

They were pioneers. They knew how to generate team spirit at their places of work, even if they were not always successful. But to have that where they lived....

I see my reader scratching his head and wondering what for. Isn't "one's home one's castle"? So why be friends with all the neighbours?

The elderly, for the most part, don't need to be, the less so, if they have worked out an even tenor of life and have only a few chores to cope with. Young couples, though, have plenty of headaches. This is because the family, which used to live together with two, three or more generations in one home, has divided, with parents now living apart from their children. Such chores as cooking, laundry, cleaning and child care, which the granny shouldered before, are now the job of the young wife, though she also has to put in a good day's work at her factory or office. And there are fairly frequent cases when the young mother is a student, and she has a husband and children to look after. She simply can't cope, let alone find time for fun, which she would like to time and again. In small families the young wife usually has too much to do. Physical strain is supplemented by psychological stress that affects relations with the husband and makes her irritable with the children. This often leads to divorce, heavy drinking and uncared-for children. How can one speak of proper child-rearing, or indeed, of harmonious development? In families like that, children are not very welcome. After the first, or at most the second, child the couple doesn't want any more. No wonder birth rates are falling in the Russian Federation, Byelorussia, the Baltic republics, and the Ukraine. What can be done about it?

The only alternative is to emancipate the woman, which legally was done long ago. Socially, as Lenin conceived it, it should be possible only given large-scale domestic economy. For that, however, living in a big block of flats or a whole complex of such blocks is not enough. What is needed is for all the tenants to be friends and help each other.

When they resolved to build housing for themselves, the young people knew that they could get the money, the building materials and the machinery. Only the manpower was missing—due to which housing programmes are falling short almost everywhere in the country. This planned but unbuilt housing would have been quite adequate to make millions of young people happy. This meant that these young people had to take the matter in hand themselves.

Building agencies had no objection to having even temporary helpers from other fields. However, these other fields had to let their personnel take time out, while keeping their jobs open for them. But why should they do so? Factory managers know that a worker with a flat of his own is far more dependable than one who is forced to rent temporary accommodation. The second factor is responsible for personnel movement and a lower standard of output.

The squad had one more argument to offer their employers. More wanted

to build their own flats than could be allowed. Some sort of selection procedure had to be used. The Kaliningrad MZK had blundered when they relied on questionnaires: they were saddled with people who objected to real community living. The Sverdlovsk MZK members resolved to put matters to a really serious test, and based this on the socialist emulation at their places of work. Would-be building workers made such a good showing that they averaged a 10-15 per cent increase in labour productivity. This compensated for the almost year-long absences of those engaged in building the complex. Hence the factory managers lost nothing by granting them leave. The young people did, however, lose out to some extent.

This is the Achilles' heel. Doesn't it seem stupid to compel physicists, chemists, lorry drivers and engineers to occupy themselves with what is not really their job, and, moreover, not after working hours, but during them? And moreover doing a job that is less skilled? Isn't that tantamount to using a microscope to hammer in a nail?

It is certainly unusual, although as it afterwards became clear, there is always a silver lining. To be fair, let me add that less skilled labour was not always and not necessarily essential. As a rule, the young people involved had learned the building trade in the student construction squads mentioned earlier. As graduate engineers, it was only to be expected that they would look for ways and means of achieving greater sophistication. Indeed, in the year they spent building the complex, they suggested many innovations and improvements that the building industry really needed. Today building chiefs admit that this has made for the more energetic application of sophisticated equipment and technology. It should also be realized that many of these young people had not seen much of life apart from school, college and factory or research institutes. Now in the space of a year they learned a lot, getting the real social training vital for future industrial executives.

But the main gain was the community team spirit they developed. Those that won the competition for the right to build their own flats were grouped into building teams of between 30 and 35 persons each. These people were very different: among them were assistant professors and laboratory technicians, engineers and workers. Yet though they were so very different, they never quarrelled, for they shared a common objective and common ideas. They worked for 10-12 hours at a stretch, moreover, without the cigarette breaks that are so habitual on ordinary construction projects. They simply burned to get the job done better and more quickly. This strenuous yet inspired labour welded them together, though there were some deserters. However, all who stuck it out became good friends and drew their families into the orbit of the group. Indeed, while the young fathers worked, the young mothers and their children prepared themselves for community living. They organized hobby groups and aired their dreams and aspirations. After the house was built, this close-knit group chose their own sections of the house. It was real community living.

My child, our children

The relationship was such that one could ask a neighbour for anything. On the other hand, one was uncomfortable when there was something to be ashamed of. On each landing the relationship was warmer than in a family as one could pick one's neighbours. Neighbourly cooperation began without any prodding, and as a result, today in the youth housing complex one finds things that are unusual elsewhere. For instance, you can see a mother taking care of three prams, to enable the two other mothers to cope with other chores. Or somebody goes shopping and buys food for the neighbours too. Or suppose only one of the mothers is at home in the six flats on the landing: she will collect all the schoolchildren from the six flats, give them a meal, and sit them down to do their homework. Without pay, of course, and without an exaggerated sense of her own virtue, because she knows her neighbour will do the same for her tomorrow. The fathers also chip in, as a result of which the spectacle of latchkey kids usually to be observed elsewhere between two in the afternoon and six in the evening when the parents come home is gone. According to statistics, that is the time when children and teenagers commit most of misdemeanors.

However, cooperation has gone even further. Whenever there is a need for alterations in a flat the neighbours take turns to do them. Magazines are also read in turn, which means less money is spent on subscriptions. Then one neighbour may mend a TV set, while another will do repairs on a car. The public services here are better organized, thus cutting out queues and the stresses they cause. And these services are much better than elsewhere, chiefly because the firmly-knit clientele can give the personnel a good dressing down if need be.

No wonder, every single family here feels that because of this common concern it is easier to bring up the children. This has resulted in a "demographic explosion" with the birth rate double that in neighbouring houses.

Children enjoy the greatest privileges. After all, every single MZK member made a point of telling me that the experimental venture they have undertaken is basically for the children. The first houses in the complex were put up some five years ago, which is a good half of a child's life. I asked some of the children who had moved into the newer blocks of flats whether there was a difference. They all chorused that there was no comparison. They explained: "You never see a single drunk here..." "It's all so very clean and tidy..." "I'm on friendly terms with all the neighbours now."

Designing more blocks of flats for Sverdlovsk's youth housing complex.

The teachers at the local kindergarten told me that children at the MZK are more advanced, more honest and have a more developed sense of justice than their peers from ordinary neighbourhoods.

True, there is another side to the coin. These children all want to be the first. However, I personally don't think this much of a drawback.

School teachers say children from the youth housing complex have a real sense of team spirit and are keen on extra-curricular activities as well as lessons.

Both kindergarten and school teachers said they were amazed at all the care the parents lavish on the children. This made me think that this might have adverse effects. After all, it is a fact that in general today's children not infrequently suffer from an overabundance of parental love. Indeed, the "my child" principle is possibly responsible more than anything else for rearing the complete egoist.

However, people in the MZK have proved up to the mark in this respect with the "my child" principle completely excluded. This means the children are not spoiled, while parental faults are reciprocally remedied.

Children here are good friends, for which there is good reason. Though only two thirds of the complex has been built so far, the children have a wide range of hobbies. No wonder, as there are four children's clubs, 18 hobby groups and the teenage Polyot club. Everything is on the spot, close to hand, and is overseen by adults, who will tick a teenager off for smoking or rudeness.

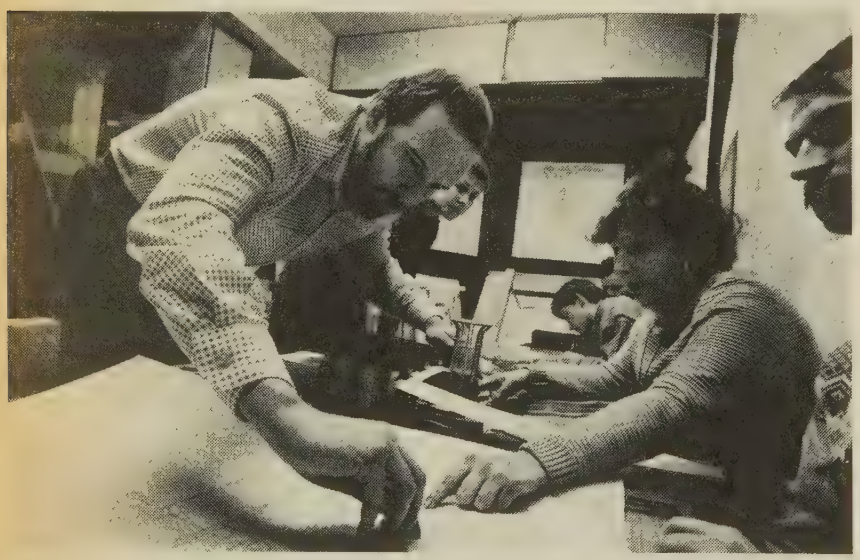
Let me note in this connection that each grown-up does what he knows best with the children. Take, for instance, the hobby groups for children run by each club. Suppose a boy and his father go with a friend to a photography group. There he finds a grown-up, one or several who are themselves good photographers, to teach the children the ins and outs of the pursuit. Or take the squads in each house that bring together children of different ages. At the head of each is a boy or girl whom the children themselves choose. Though the boy or girl need not necessarily be the oldest, he or she will definitely command the greatest authority. However there is always an adult around to advise. True, the children are first polled as to whom of the grown-ups they would like most to have with them if they were in trouble. In this way the most suitable adults, whose company the children find exciting and fascinating, are elected.

Of course, it is mostly the men who try to do all they can for the children. Their prestige is exceptionally high: as they were the builders of the flats, it is no wonder that the boys look up to their fathers as models to emulate. In this respect the women do all they can to boost the male image.

I will not however say everything is rosy where upbringing is concerned. Some parents fear that there is too much organization, others, that the children could become accustomed to having everything done for them, to being an elite. Still other parents are embarrassed by perceptible symptoms of that dangerous malaise of heavy-handed administrativeness. If there is anything of that sort, it is truly embryonic. After all people in Sverdlovsk are only feeling their way: there is no theory to help them out.

After some hit-and-miss approaches, they have concluded that amateurishness is totally unacceptable where child rearing and character training are concerned. They want professional educators, competent in both theory and practice. To this end they have arranged a special nationwide competition for educators to work at an experimental school, or rather, an educational and character-training centre of which a school factory will comprise the basic section. They have already got the funds, some 10 million rubles, and will very shortly start building a block of flats for the educators they plan to invite from all over the country. They are profoundly aware that to train the right sort of people for the 21st century, they cannot dispense with a well-developed if costly infrastructure for upbringing and character formation by which is meant the necessary premises, sports grounds, equipment etc. What they particularly desire is an honest-to-goodness factory for the children. Indeed, though they get their children to work to keep the neighbourhood neat and tidy, they realize that this should be really hard work as otherwise its salutary impact is lost.

That, though, is more in the way of a warning. In reality, the MZK is bringing out the best in people.



This group of young designers want everything in the new blocks of flats to be as attractive as possible.

Photos by V. Arutyunov, A. Shpinev and S. Vetrov

Brain and brawn

Back at their old jobs, some of these people present an unwelcome contrast. While engaged in building the MZK, they became accustomed to working hard and productively, and, moreover, not only or chiefly for the remuneration. There is something else, which Gennady Shumikhin, a youthful assistant professor at the Polytechnic, told me about, when admitting that though he had quickly made up for his year's leave of absence as far as his brain was concerned, he really didn't know what to do with his hands.

"I like to have both hands and head working at once," he explained.

He is not the only one to come back from the MZK with such notions. However, they have the opportunity to use idle hands by applying their energies in the evenings at one workshop or another, or on the construction of another house. They get their children to pitch in, so that the young ones do not grow into helpless, one-sided people, of the kind that is all too common.

One reader observed in a letter to me that the MZK members had been brought together by the circumstance of a shared unsettled existence, but

that with time private property would separate them. There is no doubt that private or personal property does that and this is already to be observed in Sverdlovsk. An MZK dweller who owns a car and a dacha is more often than not removed from the common concerns of his neighbours. He will stand aloof, be less willing to offer or ask for help. His children, I have been told, have less of the esprit de corps. The moving spirits behind the MZK are aware of that. They are increasing the proportion of what might be called community consumption, which is more economical from the social point of view. However, that has to be checked and rechecked, and this is being done.

The example set by the young people of Sverdlovsk has been emulated in some 200 towns and townships. The movement is growing, though there has been what one might call vulgarization or oversimplification. In some places only the simplest and easiest version of "building your own flat" has been adopted. Elsewhere though improvements have been introduced, with workers using their spare time to build flats for themselves.

Meanwhile in Sverdlovsk, the movement is gaining in depth. The latest innovation has been a proposal to evolve a type of self-administration that accords with the democratic life style. After much argument it was realized Lenin's formula for the Soviets of working people's deputies afforded the best model. It was decided to organize the youth housing complex along these lines, to which end its tenants elected a body of 50 deputies and a chairman as their local executive council. The regional CPSU Committee backed the idea. At their annual conference recently they elected, besides the 50 deputies, another two to represent their local council on the district Soviet. All this marks the start of a new experiment, which means that in time Sverdlovsk will have a fully self-governing community that will be self-financing as well. The youth housing complex has already opened a bank account and is now concluding contracts to enable its members to earn, with their brains and brawns, the money to put still more audacious ideas into effect. ■

EXCLUSIVE FOR NEW TIMES

How is public opinion studied in the Soviet Union? New Times correspondent Evgeny Andrianov interviews VILEN IVANOV, Ph.D., Director of the Sociology Institute of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences.

Barometer of peace

Could you tell us about the public opinion surveys your institute carries out?

In recent years our researchers have repeatedly taken public opinion samplings in connection with major international events and Soviet foreign policy initiatives. We have conducted public opinion polls on the results of the summit meetings in Geneva (1985) and Reykjavik (1986), and studied the attitude to the idea of a nuclear-free world as part of the preparation for the international forum For a Nuclear-Free World, for the Survival of Mankind (1987).

Could you tell us in more detail about the latest survey?

It was held on the eve of the forum, on February 5-6, 1987. Initially the survey was intended to be parallelled by a survey by the American Public Agenda Foundation. We proposed conducting the surveys together, and the foundation's president, Daniel Yankelovich, received the suggestion with enthusiasm. However, the Americans were not prepared to carry out the survey at such short notice for various financial and organizational reasons. So the survey was confined to Moscow. We polled 1,066 people resident in three districts and representing the main strata of the city's working population. The sampling ensures accuracy to within 3 per cent either way. Pollees were offered 16 questions on problems of disarmament and creating a nuclear-free world.

What were your findings?

Eighty-nine per cent of those polled agree that there will be no winners in a full-scale nuclear war and 95 per cent believe that the further stockpiling and buildup of nuclear arms increases the risk of their accidental use.

Two questions commanded the greatest degree of unanimity: that of banning nuclear tests as an important step towards nuclear disarmament, and the need to place the survival of mankind above all other interests: 96 per cent said "yes," and 1 per cent said "no."

I should like to single out the question of the possibility of first use of nuclear weapons: 93 per cent of those polled are sure that the U.S.S.R. will never be the first to use nuclear weapons. Only 8 per cent were confident that the U.S. will never use nuclear weapons first.

The press in this country reported the poll of Soviet and American schoolchildren last year. It was called "The Future and Nuclear War." Could you tell us more about it?

This pioneering survey was cosponsored by our institute and the U.S.A. and Canada Studies Institute of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences on the Soviet side, and Harvard University in conjunction with Maryland University, on the American side. In the Soviet Union, 2,024 students in grades 5 to 10 inclusive in schools in the Rostov and Tambov regions of the R.S.F.S.R. were questioned. The American sociologists conducted a survey of 3,372 schoolchildren in the state of Maryland. The age breakdown of the Soviet pollees was as follows: 10.9 per cent were aged 12; 24 per cent, 13; 20.4 per cent, 15; 14.9 per cent, 16; 7.3 per cent, 17. Girls accounted for 56 per cent and boys for 44 per cent. Our American colleagues used a similar scheme.

We offered a questionnaire containing 81 questions. The first part focussed on general questions, including those on the future and the problems facing the world. The second part had to do with the immediate aim of the survey: problems of war and peace, the danger of nuclear war, and Soviet-American relations.

What did the survey reveal? Is there common ground in the views expressed by Soviet and American youngsters?

Most of the young people in both countries are well aware of the destruc-

tive capacity of nuclear weapons and the global impact of nuclear war. This may explain why 70 per cent in both groups do not hope to survive in a nuclear war, even if they are provided with shelter and food, and why an overwhelming majority (80 per cent in the U.S.S.R., and 72 per cent in the U.S.) believe there will be no winners in a nuclear war.

The majority of young people in the Soviet Union and the U.S. are concerned about the possibility of nuclear war. Opinions were divided, however, on the question of when such a war could break out, with more than 40 per cent of American schoolchildren (as against 9 per cent of Soviet schoolchildren) believing that a nuclear war could happen in their lifetime. By contrast, only 14 per cent of American youngsters (compared with 56 per cent in the Soviet Union) believe that it will never happen.

A large majority in both countries (95 per cent in the U.S.S.R. and 66 per cent in the U.S.A.) believe the manufacture and testing of nuclear weapons should be halted immediately.

Opinion polls in the U.S. show that many Americans continue to see us as enemies. One survey showed that 60 per cent of Americans believe the Soviet Union is an "empire of evil" threatening the moral and religious values of America. As a consequence, 61 per cent said they would rather be "dead than Red."

That is true. But one should not discount the findings of other American surveys. For example, 79 per cent of Americans believe there are no reasons in the world that could justify the use of nuclear weapons.

You see a contradiction, I would even say a conflict, between the "enemy" stereotype and awareness of the mortal danger for everyone in the event of a nuclear war. All American opinion surveys reveal this duality in the mass consciousness of Americans, caused, on the one hand, by the "Soviet scare" and, on the other, by fear of nuclear war.

Opinion polls have revealed that Soviet people feel much more friendly towards Americans than Americans feel towards us. Do surveys help form a true image of the other nation?

It is hard to say at the moment. Not enough results of our surveys are being published inside the U.S.S.R., not to speak of publication in Western countries. We do try to popularize our data through newspapers, radio and television and bring them to the people in the street. Of course, public opinion polls alone are not enough. But if we could highlight the difference in perceptions... Perhaps this would make the American reader or TV viewer think about the reasons for this difference. This could help them form a more adequate image of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people.

An international forum of scientists held last February proposed drawing up a so-called International Barometer of Peace programme. What sort of project is it? Has anything been done in concrete terms?

The participants in the forum decided to set up a Fund for the Survival of Mankind. And Soviet sociologists proposed an international structure within the fund's framework to make it possible to study public opinion on the basic issues of the struggle for peace, a nuclear-free world, and disarmament. We have contacted some academic institutions—the U.S.A. and Canada Studies Institute, the Institute of World Economics and International Relations, and the Soviet Peace Committee. So we can say that the prerequisites for an International Barometer are taking shape.

We have discussed this idea with Western sociologists. During the international symposium on the "image of the enemy" held early this year, we agreed to conduct joint studies with Professor John Mack, director of the Centre for Psychological Studies in the Nuclear Age at Harvard University, and his colleagues.

The programme has drawn positive comment from some eminent political scientists and journalists in other Western countries. True, some of them proposed a survey not of public opinion, but of governments. I disagree. All governments have to varying degrees to take into account the opinion of their constituencies. So, it is the opinion of the public that we must study first.

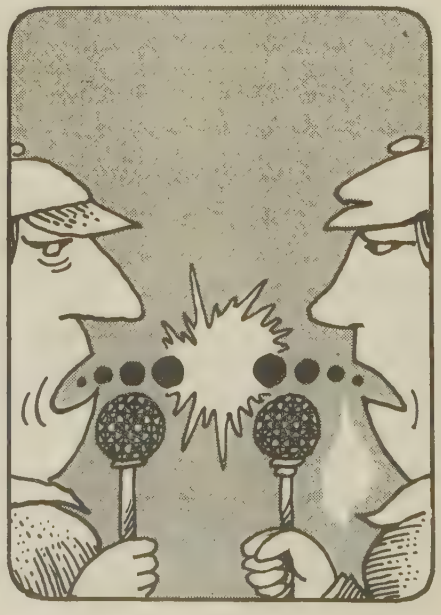
In a word, our first survey gives us grounds to presume that we can count on the leading Western scientists' cooperation in carrying out this programme.

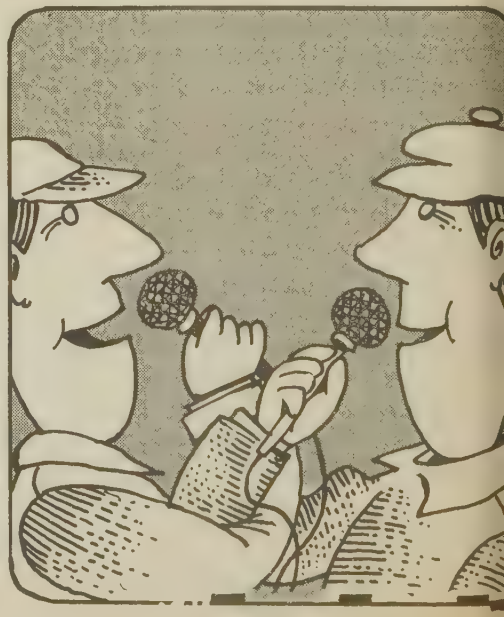
What benefits would accrue from this international project?

Regular opinion surveys in various countries could provide adequate information on the state of political consciousness of people worldwide, how they react to the key problems of our time, and possible ways of resolving them. It would be a good idea to present this information periodically to the U.N. Secretary-General, and bring it to the knowledge of people the world over through the mass media.

I believe the development and implementation of such a project could be useful in bringing together all those who seek to avert a universal holocaust and create a civilization without nuclear weapons.

Drawing by Nikolai Shcherbakov





Curing a river

The river Dimbovita runs from east to west through Bucharest, the Romanian capital founded on its banks more than 500 years ago. This narrow and rather shallow tributary of the Arges was once famous for its fish and its cold limpid water.

But the fish have long disappeared, and its water is no longer limpid: the entire 25-km stretch within the city boundaries has in fact become a gutter in a fast-growing conurbation—the population of Bucharest has trebled over the past 50 years to more than two million.

True, there are a number of clean reservoirs, including the four lakes in the northern part of the city—Baneasa, Herastrau, Floreasca and Tei, with their colonies of seagulls. But the filthy Dimbovita is largely polluting the environment.

The situation, however, will soon be remedied, and the river will regain its purity.

"We have found a simple solution to the problem," says Lasarescu, the engineer who heads the Dimbovita project. "The river will be enclosed in concrete shell which in cross section will represent two trapezoids—the upper being larger than the lower—with their bases conjoining and divided by a solid concrete partition. The open, upper floor will serve as the bed of the river, which will have pure water. The lower, closed, floor will consist of three sections, two of which will be used to collect sewage, which will be discharged beyond the city boundaries; the third section will serve as a drainage canal for ground waters. As you see, it's all very simple. . . ."

Simple, indeed, on the face of it. One does not have to be an expert to see that the solution suggested by the 56-year-old engineer, who put all his knowledge and vast experience into it, is original, well considered and rational. For more than thirty years Lasarescu has been designing hydraulic installations which have been built not only in Romania, but in other countries as well.

From the windows of the Research and Design Institute of Water Conservation on the Dimbovita's Independence Embankment one can see a section of the concrete bed under construction. The man-made bed will be 35 metres wide and from 1.5 to 4.5 metres deep. A total of five tunnels and 15 bridges will span the river.

The artificial lake, the biggest water reservoir in the capital—it occupies an area of 220 hectares—is almost complete. When filled, its maximum depth will be 12 metres. The lake will be used to maintain the stability of the river level. The new bed is also nearing completion.

"We started the building work in June 1985," continues Lasarescu, "and plan to complete it in a few months."

On the banks, trees and shrubs will be planted and sports facilities built. A big sports and entertainment complex for young people is being erected on an island in the middle of the reservoir.

The dam was built in 18 months instead of 30 months as planned. This was made possible above all by a high level of mechanization and an extensive use of prefabricated concrete structures.

My excursion to the river was preceded by a visit to the State Planning Committee, where we talked not only of the positive results of the first year of the eighth five-year-plan period, but also of the austerity regime, which will help the country repay its foreign debt sooner.

Under the circumstances, the people are experiencing certain difficulties. And I naturally wondered whether or not it was reasonable to spend so much on the amelioration of the river. Wouldn't it be better to postpone the project?

"We are, indeed, living through a difficult period," they told me at the committee. "But projects like this one are of enormous social significance. The amelioration of the river does not only mean a considerable improvement in the environment, new green zones, marinas and sports complexes. The reservoir, the dam and the seven hydraulic units are a guarantee that Bucharest will no longer suffer from spring floods, that the 1,100 hectares of fertile land around the capital will be properly irrigated, and that the population will have more vegetables and melons."

VITALY CHERNYAVSKY
our special correspondent

Bucharest—Moscow

Digging a new bed for the river.

Agerpres photo

Vienna is referred to as "the crossroads of Europe." This is true in more senses than one

Vienna: thirty-two years on

From our special correspondent
ANATOLY KOVRIGIN

A 343-step spiral staircase leads to the top of the open-work tower of the ancient cathedral of St. Stephen, which commands a majestic view of the plain spreading from the Danube in the east to the steep hills of the Viennese Forest describing a semicircle round the city on the other side. On my first journalistic assignment to Vienna, I had climbed up and down these steps on many occasions. Revisiting the city now, four years later, I walked all the way up again to see how much the city had changed. Everything was more or less as I remembered it, with new structures fitting neatly into the old contours and giving the Austrian capital a distinctive look, what I'd call an aura of permanence. Did it come from the people's loving care for their historical heritage, I asked myself. Or perhaps from their concern for the future?

Lost in thought, I started slowly down the stairs and, almost at the very exit, ran into a hoary gentleman sporting a bushy moustache of the kind that had come into vogue in the emperor Franz Joseph's time. What caught my eye, however, was not so much his appearance as a copy of the magazine The Soviet Union Today sticking out of his coat pocket. I introduced myself and we had a chat over a cup of Melange in the café Aida, next to the cathedral. Herr Rauscher told me he used to work in a printshop and had retired four years ago. Born in Vienna, he was very proud of his native city. "I often come over here to look up old Steffl [as the Viennese call their cathedral.—**A.K.**]," he informed me. "This is a crowded place, and as I get older I find solitude increasingly hard to bear. The cathedral brings back many memories of the past. I hope you enjoyed the view from the top. Incidentally, do you know who saved it from destruction in 1945? A compatriot of yours, a young red-haired lieutenant. Everything was ablaze, shells were exploding, but he and his men rushed to the rescue of the burning cathedral through a hail of bullets. To make matters worse, the SS men had taken all the fire engines and other fire-fighting equipment to St. Pölten, 60 km away, a few days before the Soviet troops arrived. So water was brought in in helmets. But for the lieutenant, our Steffl would have burned down."

St. Stephen's cathedral in Vienna.
Photo by author

As I listened to Herr Rauscher's story I thought of the Soviet soldiers who lay buried in Viennese cemeteries. Thousands of them died in the fight for Vienna in April 1945. An imposing monument to our fighting men towers in Schwarzenbergplatz in the centre of the city.

400 sessions

The spring of 1945 was a prelude to the spring of 1955. Thirty-two years ago the Foreign Ministers of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., Britain and France signed a document in the Marble Hall of Vienna's old Belvedere Palace determining the entire subsequent development of the country: the State Treaty Reestablishing an Independent and Democratic Austria. Thousands of jubilant Viennese flooded the streets around the palace, and couples whirled to the strains of Strauss's waltzes.

The State Treaty did not come easily. It was preceded by nearly a decade of negotiations between the former allied powers. Almost 400 sessions were held, many of them attended by Austrian representatives. The Western side, in particular the Americans, tried repeatedly to obstruct a settlement in Austria. The U.S. was determined to draw the Alpine republic into the NATO bloc.

The Soviet Union, however, took a firm and consistent stand from the outset. It insisted that Austria was to be a sovereign, democratic and neutral state. Finally, the document confirming the republic's status was signed. The Austrians themselves largely contributed to the success of the negotiations by their efforts to secure a just and sensible decision that would accord with their interests.

After the State Treaty had taken effect and all foreign troops had been withdrawn from the country, on October 26 parliament passed the law on the permanent neutrality of Austria. Since then, October 26 has been observed as a national holiday. The resuscitated state has voluntarily undertaken to join no military alliances and keep foreign military bases off its territory.

Austria's record over the thirty-odd years since then provides ample evidence that the country is on the right track. It commands considerable prestige in the international arena, and

has an active and constructive role to play in getting international cooperation under way, and resolving mankind's pressing problems.

In 1979, Vienna officially became the third international centre of the United Nations. A modern compound on the left bank of the Danube accommodates a number of specialized U.N. institutions and such an important organization as the IAEA.

Austria's contribution to the development of the all-European process is particularly significant. It is not by chance that the Austrian capital has been chosen as the venue for the current meeting of the participating states of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The Austrian capital, referred to as "the European crossroads," plays host to numerous international conferences, symposia and congresses, and to leaders and statesmen from various countries who go there for meetings and contacts.

The Vice-Chancellor's view

What role have the State Treaty and the law on permanent neutrality played in Austria's postwar history? I put this question to Alois Mock, the country's Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister.

"I think," he replied, "that the strict fulfilment of our commitments is the most important component of our policy. This fully applies to the State Treaty, which has been fundamental to the revival of an independent and free Austrian Republic. I consider myself a political successor to Chancellor Raab and Foreign Minister Figl, who were among the architects of this vital treaty in May 1955.

"As for the law on neutrality," he went on, "it predetermined Austria's new and positive role in the international community. It gave it a chance to play an active part in tackling the urgent problems that confront big and small countries alike.

"These two events can be likened to a historic breakthrough. They laid a firm foundation for progress in Soviet-Austrian relations. There remains, no doubt, plenty of room for the extension of our contacts. This is true of the cultural as well as the economic sphere. Austria does not rank with the superpowers politically. But culturally, at least, it can be spoken of as an extremely advanced country.

"We are following the process of reconstruction steadily gathering momentum in your country with a great deal of interest," Alois Mock said in conclusion. "The sweeping changes you are trying to effect will certainly take time to bring about, but new and clearly defined prospects of cooperation between our two countries are already emerging. Take the idea of setting up joint ventures, for instance. What makes this idea especially appealing to us is that it applies not only to big enterprises, but also to small and middle companies, which constitute the basis of the Austrian economy. So it is safe to claim that the outlook for mutually profitable business links between our two countries is bright."

This from one of the leading government coalition figures is most encouraging. Optimism and good prospects are all the more important now that trade between our two countries is tending to decrease. Moreover, Alois Mock's statement is a fitting response to the calls for an exclusively Western orientation that are being made by certain quarters in Austria.

Those who really wish the Austrian Republic well always remember the lessons of history and cherish the political traditions that have taken shape over the past few decades. Obviously, neither joining the Common Market, acquiring missiles for the Austrian army, nor other such steps approved by NATO can guarantee the Alpine republic's security more effectively than the strict observance of the commitments it has undertaken under the State Treaty.

The first steps of the coalition

So what's new in Vienna? I found its streets as neat, and its parks with their trim lawns and well-tended flower beds as attractive as ever.

The tenor of life in the city has not changed, either. By six in the morning more than half Vienna's citizens are already up, and either on their way to work, or clocking in. Early to rise and early to bed is a rule with them, and by 10 p.m. the city is quiet.

There are changes, nevertheless, especially in the sphere of domestic policy. The "big coalition" formed last January and comprising Socialists and "Populists" has only taken its first steps, which mark a definite shift to the right in the country's policy. To judge from its programme, the new cabinet intends to solve the grave current economic problems at the expense of the working people, who are in for heavier taxes, and a still higher cost of living; this will inevitably tell on their welfare standards. Under the slogan of making the economy healthier, a frontal attack has been mounted on the public sector. It is in that sector that the wave of mass dismissals has arisen.

"What looked at first like the coalition government's growing pains," the respected magazine Wochenpresse admitted, "is now perceived as a symptom of stagnation. The 'big coalition' has still failed to live up to the hopes pinned on it. Instead of tackling pressing problems, it is constantly burdening citizens with newer ones."

While encroaching on the working people's social gains, the new cabinet is openly flirting with big business owners and plutocrats, who are being granted new tax benefits and allocations. April 1, for instance, saw a drastic reduction of taxes on gold jewellery, precious stones, furs and other luxuries, which are far from being the basic necessities of life. All this is being done in order to maintain business activity at an "adequate level."

The results of this policy can be seen in Herbststrasse, in Vienna's 16th district. Huge crowds gather there in front of the central labour exchange long before opening time. The crowds have been growing steadily over the past few months. Women and men of all ages wait in eager anticipation for the heavy door to open, hoping against hope that this time they will be offered jobs.

This social problem has become acute in Austria today. Early this year, the unemployment figure reached 235,000, the highest for thirty years. There is no hope of an early change for the better in the employment situation. Most experts predict that this year's economic growth rate will constitute one instead of the two per cent expected until a few months ago.

But for all that, Austrians remain optimistic. They are neither losing heart, nor resorting to open protest. At any rate, industrial workers have downed tools for an average of only a few seconds each over the past few years. Labour disputes are resolved peacefully, as a rule, at the negotiating table.

The day before my departure from Vienna, I ran into Herr Rauscher again in the pedestrian precinct near Steffl and told him how much I liked the old part of Vienna in spring. My words put him into a reminiscent frame of mind again, and he went back to the events of April 1945 and May 1955—events never to be forgotten.

Vienna—Moscow

Land brought back to life

We visited the village of Tesan in the southern province of Takeo. It is a typical settlement for the region, housing 160 families. The house we chose to stop at was not one of the best.

Its owner, Ki Kam, told us: "We are not rich, but we have everything we need: food, clothing and household goods. Some things we have made ourselves, others we bought at the market in the district centre or bartered in our own village. The house isn't bad, but as you see it has an earthen floor. The roof is made of straw and the walls are bamboo covered with palm leaves. There are six of us, and we have enough to do to keep us all busy. The adults work in mutual assistance work groups, take care of our kitchen garden (half a hectare), and look after our livestock (a bull, a cow, two pigs and some thirty chickens). Last year we got over a ton of rice from the work group. That won't last us until the next harvest—but we shall be able to buy some with the money received from the sale of our vegetable produce. Part of this money will be set aside for the materials needed to build a new house.

"Our present house," Ki Kam explained, "was built with the help of other villagers when we returned from the so-called commune after the Pol Pot regime was overthrown. Many of the homes in the village were either in ruins or burnt to the ground. Now we have saved 50,000 riels—that's enough to build a good new house."

"Does it suit the family to work in the mutual assistance work group?" I asked Ki Kam.

"Yes," he replied. "Ask anyone working in these groups and they will say the same thing. Ours is a group of the first type. That means that each individual owns his own livestock and tools, but we work together on the main jobs. There used to be a lot of illiteracy. Now some people have finished special courses and elementary school. All children start school at the age of six, and some attend the junior secondary school in the district centre."

The village of Tesan is one of 170 in the Bati District and one of thousands in the republic where more than 100,000 mutual assistance work groups have been organized. As in the Bati District there are three types of groups—12 of the first type, 80 of the second, and the rest belonging to the third type.

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Kampuchean People's Republic, Chea Song, described their role in the rural communities. "As I see it," he said, "the peasants' participation in the mutual assistance work groups is a dream come true—the dream of people always ready to help one another, and of a united nation. This voluntary union of peasants, and their joint work have significantly helped normalize the situation in the country after the horrors of its monstrous national tragedy. Each year May 20 is marked in the People's Republic of Kampuchea as Memorial Day for the victims of Pol Pot's policy of genocide."

Chea Song spoke with bitterness of the recent past. Not only had the Pol Pot clique exterminated more than three million Kampucheans, but it had poisoned the minds of those who survived. Slave labour, the tilling of fields with complete disregard for the requirements of irrigation, and land mismanagement had left a terrible legacy—most of the rice plantations were devastated and harvests had fallen drastically....

From the very first days of the people's revolutionary government, mutual assistance work groups began to spring up—the forerunners of farm cooperatives.

In groups of the third or lowest type, each family is provided with a plot of land. Certain matters—organizational, administrative, social and cultural—are decided jointly by the whole group. This includes such issues as coping with state plans, the distribution of mineral fertilizer and selected seeds. In groups of the second type, the peasants join together only for the most labour-consuming jobs, such as the construction of canals and dykes. Groups of the first type are in effect farm cooperatives in which production is organized on the basis of the collective labour of the peasants on land provided by the state.

"It might seem," the deputy minister told me, "that the peasants' involvement in collective labour is now evolving more slowly, while in the first few years of people's government it proceeded quickly. But at that time—when the country lay in ruins—even the simple joining of forces produced noticeable results. Now, naturally, the rate at which fresh sections of the population are being involved in the cooperative movement has slowed down. Nevertheless, more than 90 per cent of the rural population are now members of mutual assistance work groups. Thanks to the new form of labour organization, the average rice yield has risen from 0.73 tons to 1.17 tons from hectare in the years of people's power. And as a result overall harvests have gone up. They are now in excess of 2 million tons, which was about the average in prewar years. Although there is still a shortage of food, it will be eliminated over the next few years.

Working on a rice paddy.

TASS photo

"Have you seen our polders?" Chea Song asked, and when I shook my head he advised me, "go and have a look. They cannot, of course, be compared with Dutch dykes, or those in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Not everything is being done as we would like it to be. But we believe they are a very promising enterprise."

And so I found myself in the vicinity

of Prekneuv—the district centre of Kandal Province, which is being turned into a major rice-growing area. All round I could see reclaimed land, tilled and protected from the sea by dykes, or polders. The population from time immemorial had learnt to make full use of the overflow from the Prekoksak River, which in the rainy season floods large areas. In the 1960s-70s, a dam was built across the river, and the banks of the reservoir were reinforced with a strong dyke, which later made it possible to organize the regulated irrigation of the fields. Then came the Pol Pot regime and people were forced to dig canals. However, left to itself, the water could not flow into the fields as the reservoir lay at a lower level and there were no pumps.

At present work is under way in the centre of the northern polder on a series of big—3-4 hectares each—plots for the mechanized growing of rice. By the side of a small lake there is a temporary field camp, with living quarters.

"It all began with the arrival of Soviet specialists," the director of the experimental rice-growing station, Kay Yuti, told me. "The group consisted of land reclamation experts, builders and plant breeders. They estimated the quantity and nature of the work to be done and then together with our people got down to rebuilding the whole system. Roads have also been built, as well as the main canal, and water has been passed through it. Last year we grew two crops on an area of 28 hectares. The yield was about 5-6 tons of grain, that is double, if not triple, what we get from irrigated fields, and 4-5 times as much as from non-irrigated ones.

"Both the northern polder and the southern one have a great future," Kay Yuti is convinced. "With the introduction of a modern engineering irrigation system we hope by the year 1990 to have reclaimed 500 hectares. And we shall not stop at that," he said. "We intend to increase production, especially of food and export technical crops."

* * *

At the 5th Congress of the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea a great deal of attention was paid to the need to bring a new life to the villages where the vast majority of the population lives. Many problems still have to be solved—there are not enough specialists, machines, fuel or fertilizer.... But the peasants and all the working people are becoming more active both in work and their civic attitudes. Therein lies the guarantee of the republic's future achievements.

ANATOLY SHELUDKO

Pnom Penh

Bridges across the Baltic

Sometimes the Scandinavian peninsula is compared with a tiger preparing to leap. A glance at the map shows that the beast stands on the continent only with its hind paws. Of the region's countries only Finland and the mainland part of Denmark have overland communications with Europe. Sweden, Norway and the Danish islands are separated by straits. The biggest of them are the Great Belt, the Little Belt and the Oresund.

Dozens of ferries shuttle across the straits annually carrying millions of passengers, and hundreds of thousands of motor vehicles and railway cars. Many of these giant ships are like floating cities. They are costly and complex to maintain. Moreover, at peak periods bottlenecks form, while frequent Baltic storms paralyze traffic. Accidents also happen.

What is the way out? Building bridges. This is not a new idea but as yet only one bridge exists, across the Little Belt. As early as 1855 the Danish Minister of War A. Tscherning proposed building a tunnel under the Great Belt. But the discrepancy between the ambitiousness of the project and the existing technical possibilities doomed it to remain on paper. For various reasons none of the subsequent projects were carried out either.

There is now renewed and evidently serious interest in the problem of transportation in the Baltic straits. The Danish Folketing has supported the idea of building a bridge over the Great Belt, while the Swedish Riksdag has given its backing to building a bridge over the Oresund. The ministers of communications have urgently begun to prepare the necessary documents. It is expected that in the autumn the Danish and Swedish governments will come out with a joint initiative. So far only some details are available.

The intention is, over the course of five years, to build an 18-kilometre bridge across the Great Belt. The entire structure will consist of a number of dykes, rising gradually from the shores to the centre, a "low bridge" on supports 12 metres high for the passage of small ships and a "tall bridge" spanning the main channel. The most difficult stage will be the construction of a span 1,426 metres in length. Suspended on two huge pylons, it will be 76 metres above sea level.

The project provides for six-lane motor and two-lane rail traffic. But to save money, a narrower bridge has been proposed. The idea of a tunnel also has its supporters. But in any case, astronomic sums will be needed, of the order of 15 billion Danish kroner. It has not yet been decided who will provide the money. Some think this should be done by the state. Others suggest that Danish private business should be called in, while still others believe the construction and operation of the project should be handed over to a consortium of foreign firms. True, the latter does not greatly appeal to the Danes as it would mean placing the central link of the Danish transport system in foreign hands. The country's strained finances and its huge foreign debt, however, may outweigh national feelings.

In the Oresund it was initially intended to build a bridge or a tunnel in the narrowest place—between the Swedish Helsingborg and the Danish Helsingør. But now preference is being given to a bridge-and-tunnel combination between Copenhagen and the Swedish port of Malmö. Danish and Swedish experts agree that it would be expedient to use this bridge-tunnel both for automobile and rail transport. This would make it possible to solve the transport problem in the area of the Baltic straits comprehensively, economically and, most importantly, with due account taken of the expected growth in freight turnover. To keep obstacles to shipping to a minimum, it is intended to build the tunnel under the Danish part of the strait from Saltholm Island to the suburbs of Copenhagen, where Kastrup international airport is located and there is access to the Danish road and rail network. Then passengers and freight from Sweden and Norway would reach transit routes leading from Denmark to Central Europe.

The part of the project in Swedish waters poses a bigger problem. Here

engineers propose to build either a bridge or a bridge and a tunnel. The final decision is of great importance for shipping in the Oresund. The source of finance for the project, however, is not in doubt: Swedish official representatives have more than once stated their readiness to provide the necessary funds—about ten billion Swedish kroner. If joint Danish-Swedish decisions on the Oresund are made this year, the bridge-tunnel may materialize by 1995.

Specialists, however, point to a number of consequences of the change in transport links in the Baltic straits that have not yet been investigated. For instance, there could be adverse changes in the water exchange between the Baltic and North seas as a result of the blocking of existing currents by dykes and pylons. The Danish environment protection agency believes the salinity of the Baltic Sea will drop, as rivers annually discharge 750 cubic kilometres of fresh water into it. This will cause fish stocks to decline. The annual cod catch will drop by 100,000 tons. The rapid proliferation of weeds in bays and river estuaries could turn the sea into a marsh. But the Baltic's health is in danger as it is. The possibility of ice conditions in winter deteriorating cannot be excluded.

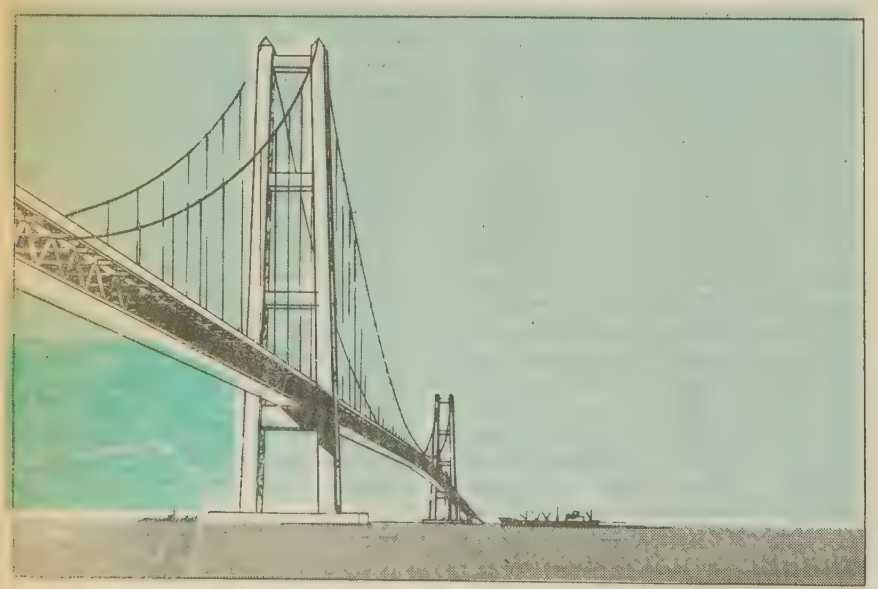
Shipping in the straits, which are vital sea lanes, will also be affected. According to Professor Klaus Petersen's data, more than 20,000 merchant and naval ships sail annually into the Atlantic and from it through the Great Belt and the Oresund alone. The vast majority of them do not sail under the Danish flag. Although in accordance with tradition and international law, both these straits are open for free passage, this freedom will be restricted. For the bridges and dykes will seriously impair the manoeuvring of ships and the safe passage of large floating structures, for example, drilling platforms or docks. It is possible that the presence of local pilots will be obligatory on board all ships, including naval ones.

The building of the bridges will also introduce new factors in the military field. There is talk in NATO circles of using these structures for sending troops to Denmark and Norway. The idea is that the gap will be reduced between NATO's northern flank and neutral Sweden. Last but not least, the NATO strategists' dream of blocking the exit of Soviet naval ships from the Baltic into the Atlantic will get material substantiation. It will take just a small quantity of explosives to make the huge structures collapse and block the shallow straits. True, terrorists also have ample supplies of explosives, and specialists say that this, too, should be taken into consideration in military planning.

In short, even some of the potential consequences of building bridges and tunnels in the Baltic straits are so diverse that the adoption of a final decision should be given deep and careful consideration. Evidently, the views not only of Denmark and Sweden, but also of the other Baltic countries should be sounded out and taken into account. I believe that by way of consultation with interested countries, the Soviet Union included, it should be possible to work out a way of improving transport ties in the straits that would be acceptable to the entire region. All the possibilities for this are there—the Baltic neighbours have long been cooperating in the field of environment protection, fisheries and maritime safety.

ALEXANDER POLYUKHOV

Artist's impression in the Danish Weekendavisen of the main span of the Great Belt bridge.



People ask me: why is "The Last Pastoral" (published in the third issue of the magazine Novy Mir for this year) devoted to the problems of a future war or, rather, to its consequences? Why have I decided to tackle the subject now—and not at any other time?

Clearly this is the same as asking: "If not you or me, if not us—then who? If not now—then when?" After all, almost everything has been said and everything is known about what will happen to mankind and our planet within a minute, an hour, days of the beginning of the end. Maelstroms of fire, all-penetrating radiation, nuclear night, a momentary cry—intensified a millionfold—of pain, anguish and horror reverberating in space. . . .

Some 10-15 years ago not everyone believed this knowledge should be available or that it is essential to everybody. That that was the case in America we remember well. But, frankly speaking, here too there were some who cautioned us: don't alarm the people, they'll stop working altogether. (And, of course, there were such catchwords as "pacifism," "abstract humanism," "pessimism.")

I remember when Vasil Bykov returned from Moscow and described how he had been reprimanded for taking part in the Byelorussian TV film "The Formula of Humanism." In it we interviewed prominent writers Pavel Nilin, Victor Astafyev, Valentin Rasputin, Arseniy Tarkovsky, Vladimir Soloukhin and Yuri Karyakin. "And I've been asked to tell you," Vasil said with his wry smile, "that you should stick to literature; such things, I was told, don't concern you."

If only that friend had known that my writing was already contaminated by the "disease": as far back as 1982, when I was still working with the Byelorussian delegation to the United Nations in New York, I had started writing the pastoral—the last. I am absolutely convinced that it is not only "the concern of literature," but its prime duty to let off a nuclear explosion in the minds and hearts of as many people as possible. So that no such explosion goes off over their heads and under their feet.

It is altogether another matter how ready we are—in our minds and work—to write seriously and dedicatedly about what we have (fortunately) never lived through, as if we had experienced it.

Before the essay, there had been articles and speeches; there was never any need to ask myself whether it con-

The writers' responsibility

ALES ADAMOVICH

cerned me or not. It gnawed at my soul, invaded my thoughts—constantly, never letting go. But "The Last Pastoral" was hard going. How? How to write about it, about all that? Work on those few pages took almost all of five years.

Was such a situation as I described in the pastoral possible—that life on our planet should disappear quite suddenly, without warning? What could men of culture, and especially writers, do to avert the threat of war?

We should consider ourselves lucky—incredibly lucky—that nothing of the kind has yet happened to us. It's true that we owe it to chance, a fluke, as our Foreign Minister remarked from the rostrum of the United Nations. Nuclear weapons are much more terrible usurers than Shakespeare's Shylock: if they ask for a return on their investment, it'll be more than just a pound of flesh.

Man can with time get used to anything, was the unhappy conclusion Dostoyevsky reached. But who would have believed that we would get to be so inured, that some people would no longer be able to imagine life without a couple of European warheads under their pillows? Many politicians find sleep much easier with them. And they see them as a status symbol—as if they'd acquired a Napoleon or a Nelson.

Can literature and the arts do anything in such a situation? Yes, certainly! But are we doing all we can? That is a different question. Some writers are already asking: is it our job? Wouldn't we lose our artistic innocence, wouldn't the strings of our lyres snap?

I am not exaggerating. Last February I happened to be at a Party meeting of the Soviet Writers' Union. And on the same day I listened to speakers at a round table of theologians and scientific experts at St. Daniel's Monastery on the subject of "Universal Security and Moral and Ethical Values." A hundred theologians representing all the principal faiths had invited us—representatives of the exact sciences and the humanities (Academician Boris Raushenbach, myself and others) as experts. What surprised me was the broad, interested and knowledgeable way in which the clergymen discussed not only the political realities of our time but also the technical details of nuclear and missile systems, SDI, etc. To be honest, they had no particular need of experts.

And what about our writers' meeting the same day? Good Lord! The same charges levelled at each other by different age and interest groups, and, by coincidence, a few speeches on the very subject that had been discussed at St. Daniel's Monastery—but with such fear of being tainted by politics, the "nagging global theme" that stands in the way of creating "truly artistic values"—which are, of course, eternal. And they seemed never to have heard that it is all too true that life on our planet can no longer be regarded as eternal.

So what can literature do? What must it do? Surely, it should create such a moral climate in society and the world that having the bomb can no longer be regarded as a status symbol, but as something to be ashamed of, as having concentration camps, gas chambers and Auschwitzes is today.

What should be done to ensure that relations between East and West or, to be more precise, between different social systems, cease to be mutually threatening and become truly worthy of the label of civilized? The slogan of our restructuring is begin with yourself. (Incidentally, Leo Tolstoy also advised beginning with oneself in all important matters.) We human beings are only real masters of ourselves. That means weighing matters up, gaining a real understanding of what in external affairs and relations depends on internal ones, and on what it depends?

When a short time ago our small group (Elem Klimov, Valentin Rasputin, Bulat Okudjava and myself) were in West Berlin, we were struck by the fact that the public in the West today sees the prospects of breaking the impasse into which mankind has again and again been led by the opponents of détente and disarmament, and the revolutionary processes now taking place in our economic, political, social and cultural life as organically linked. These processes guarantee us the trust of the widest sections of the population in other countries. And that is something even fanatics will have to take into account. But that is where the danger lies—the fanatics will do their utmost to frustrate the democratization of our society and the restructuring already under way. Do they have the means and the opportunities? They have the experience, and plenty of it. They also have support—not in the West, but here at home. This support comes from those bureaucratic forces that excel in social demagogy and are ready to take advantage of any problems in the restructuring to turn the clock back. Not for nothing do they grumble about the danger to the "very fabric of the edifice. . . ."

But we, too, have experience, and immunity to such demagogy. And we want to believe that it will be activated in the face of a difficult situation.

Here again the role and duty of writers, journalists and men of culture are immense: under no circumstances must we leave the hottest and most dangerous spots—because who else if not we? All our history, all it has taught us is very important in this respect. It must be present at once in our thinking and in our actions. Tengiz Abuladze's film "Repentance" and the articles in the national press about the vital and acute problems that face us today in the process of restructuring are all part of it.

After one press conference in West Berlin—a frank and open one and, therefore, a very happy occasion for us (and, it seemed, for others too)—a woman approached us looking rather perplexed, and said: our publication has written about such things and said they were forbidden in the Soviet Union. What do we do now? How are we to act?

We suggested that the time had perhaps come for them too to restructure.

Or as one of the documents at the round table at St. Daniel's Monastery put it: the ideological dispute between different social systems cannot ignore the moral norms of relations between people.

■

A treasure island

OLEG GERASIMOV

The first impression one gets of the small attractive-looking Tunisian town of Houmt-Souk on the island of Djérba is that there is hardly anything there except shops selling ceramicware, locally produced rugs and articles made of leather and palm leaves. It is only after a while that you become aware that it has everything a tourist haunt is supposed to have: several banks and currency exchanges, as well as cafés, restaurants, a covered bazaar—a treat to the eye—dozens of hotels, boarding houses and motels. You can rent a hut made of palm leaves, and hire a horse, a camel, a donkey or a bicycle to go sightseeing and get your fill of the exotic—provided, of course, you have the money.

The fifth season

For those who come in their cars there is a big parking lot just in front of the post office and the town hall. All the car owner has to do is drop a coin in the slot. There I saw a tall Tunisian clad in a long striped jellaba doing his rounds at a leisurely pace, examining the meters. Whenever a meter showed that the parking time had run out his assistant would bring a heavy Denver slipper and attach it to the front wheel so that the driver couldn't leave. I thought the man fettering the cars looked sullen because everyone disliked him, although there seemed to be nothing reprehensible in what he was doing.

The numerous holidaymakers from Europe are attracted in the main by the island's climate. Even in January, the coldest month, the temperature does not drop below 12°C. In December, the white-and-violet of the blossoming apricot trees and the gold of the ripe lemons and oranges give the scene a fairy-tale touch. Tens of thousands of people escape to the island from the cold and sleet of Western Europe at this time of year. April and May are still moderately warm and only in June does the heat set in.

Djerba has long been known for its salubrious climate. The Frenchman Emmanuel Grevin wrote in his book published half a century ago that in Sfax you left winter behind, in Gabès you found spring and in Tozeur, summer; but in Djerba you discovered a fifth season—a climate unlike that anywhere else with its dry air and sea breeze, its coolness and night roses. The Tunisian scholar Dr Slaheddine Tlatli says Gustave Flaubert, who came to Djerba in search of material about Carthage for his historical novel "Salammbô," sang a paeon to this part of the Mediterranean: "An island of golden dust, greenery and birds, a land where lemon trees are as tall as cedars... and the air so sweet that it keeps me alive."

I knew that Djerba was also famous for its handwoven rugs. But when my companions and I entered a shop, it was all just like what we had already seen in Cairo, Baghdad or Teheran. Shop assistants were scurrying about like ants, fetching down silk and woollen rugs of various size and design—five, ten, fifteen.... I tried to stop them by saying I was not interested in these excellent handmade carpets with their medieval Persian or Tunisian Kairouan designs. I explained that I wanted to buy a Klim, a flat-woven rug made on horizontal loom. But the shopkeeper was undaunted. He continued to praise his wares, promised to deliver the purchased rug to any European country cheap, adding by way of persuasion that with his brother he ran a shop in the Federal Republic which was doing well.

A shopkeeper who knows his trade will not let you go easily. So we "hit below the belt," asking the price of the smallest rug. On hearing it, we looked at one another and said we couldn't afford it. That wrought a complete change in the shopkeeper's attitude and he hurried to another group of tourists, while we made for the exit. Zaid, a boy of ten or so who heard our conversation with the boss, led the way bringing us to another door which opened into a production shop. Women—young, elderly and mere girls—were sitting at huge vertical metal frames working deftly with their fingers as they ran the coloured threads through the warp. From three to five women were working at each frame, with the design of the rug on profile paper pinned straight to the warp.

We asked Zaid how he had come to work here and why he was not at school.

"My mother works here," he replied, "and Father has gone abroad to make money. Who would help Mother raise the younger children if I went to school?"

As we were getting into the car we heard Zaid say that in the main street, next to the furniture store, there was a workshop where the rugs we were interested in were made, and that they employed a man by the name of Munjy who would show us round.

Arts and crafts

Indeed, next to a shopwindow displaying furniture we saw a corrugated iron building whose wide open doors were hung with rugs made from a thick woollen thread with a black-white-and-brown design—a bunch of grapes on a white field which, turned upside down, looked like a tree, lines at right angles running along the edges, or just a brown border showing off the white field.

Munjy, a man of 25, who chanced to be there, readily consented to be our guide. The rugs are made at horizontal two-tier looms with the cotton warp strung on two levels. Several hand-operated single-thread shuttles are used. Munjy showed us a 40-cm-long wooden open-top shuttle with lead plates stuffed into its ends to make it heavier. The warp levels are changed by depressing pedals connected through a system of blocks to the frame. A rod for the weaver to support himself on when depressing the pedals runs the length of the loom. It takes four days for one man to make a 1 m×1.5 m rug. When the weaving is finished the rug is combed with a metal brush. A Klim costs 15-20 Tunisian dinars (roughly 15-20 dollars), one hundredth or even less of what we were asked in the first shop we visited.

Of the eight looms in the shop six are idle. The reason is that there is no demand, cheap as the rugs are. Munjy is a worker, not the owner. He is helped by an emaciated old man who does the throwing with the help of a vertical wheel and a big spool. Munjy is paid depending on how much he has done. So he is interested in bigger sales. We left laden with rugs exuding the smell of badly washed sheep's wool.

At the bazaar you can also buy gold and silver ornaments. Goldsmiths work right in their shops making heavy gold bracelets, anklets and brooches. Silversmiths often work at home, guarding family secrets passed from generation to generation.

Tunisia is no exception in that expensive ornaments are regarded as status symbols, bespeaking the owner's social standing, prosperity and taste. The traditional sign of financial well-being for a Tunisian is—apart from ownership of land and real estate—the jewellery his women wear. This is also a way of investing spare cash, for, if in dire straits, the head of a family can pawn his wife's or daughter's bracelets at the state-run pawn shop and get 60 per cent of their value. This is widely practised throughout Tunisia, and particularly in Djerba.

Djerba jewellers use lapis lazuli, agate, jade, pearls, and especially Mediterranean coral processed in the town of Tabarka. Precious gems like diamonds, sapphires or emeralds are used seldom if at all, for it is hard to find a buyer for them.

Women on Djerba set great store by charms which are supposed to keep ill luck away and even bring good luck. What matters is the picture rather than the material or workmanship. Pictures of fish are very popular, the explanation for which is to be found partly in ancient history and partly in mythology.

I chanced to see a prosperous wedding, which is among other things a display of jewellery. The bride sparkled with gold and silver both her own and gifts from the bridegroom's parents —a diadem with pendants of gold coins or medals on her brow, gold chains with small gold plates attached to them reaching to her chest from the headdress, and big enamelled earrings.

This is, however, a rare sight, more a tribute to tradition than anything else. In their everyday life Djerba women increasingly tend to follow European fashion, without any showy extras. So local jewellers pin their hopes on the groups of tourists that occasionally trickle into the market, though there are more onlookers than buyers among them.

Under the sign of Pisces

At the entrance to a small restaurant in the old port of Houmt-Souk there is a big fishing boat complete with nets and other gear. Beside it and close to each other are several big jugs, the kind in which Tunisians still keep water, wine, wheat and olive oil. It is a stylized fountain, with water from a hidden pipe spilling over it. This is a luxury, for there is a shortage of water on the island and in every hotel room you see requests in English, French and German to use water sparingly.

The Mediterranean is anything but teeming with fish. The reasons are many, but the main one is that industrial waste from the highly developed West European countries is discharged into it. On some sections of the beach even bathing is prohibited.

This is not to say there are no fish at all. The restaurant in the port gets it from the local market. My memory retaining the riot of colours in the fish markets in Red Sea and Gulf of Aden ports, I urged my companions to visit the bazaar in the centre of the town, but its fish counters had just a few crates of sardines and greenish-gray ocean perch. Yet we did not regret having made the trip as we met Masmud, a middle-aged fisherman who was sipping coffee as he waited for his mates to return with a catch. He told us many interesting things about Djerba fishermen.

They do not, we learned, sail far from the shore. The catching is done with nets. A team of 15-17 men is headed by a skipper who is also the owner of the nets and one or several boats. No catch exceeds 80-100 kg. It is auctioned off the same day to retailers and restaurant owners. Half the proceeds go to the skipper and the other half is divided among the crew.

Meanwhile the fishermen had arrived. Masmud quickly sorted out the catch and a tall chap mounted a chair to call out the price of each bunch of strung fish.

Besides fishing, people in Djerba also till the land. But the tourist trade is the mainstay of the island's economy. A modern airport has been built here and there are nonstop flights to several European capitals.

The Europeans flocking to the island to enjoy its exotic sights and the fifth season get all the services from local people—peasants and fishermen, shopkeepers, weavers and craftsmen who have their problems and whose lives on this island paradise are far from easy.

Tunis—Djerba—Moscow

A tournament of surprises

The ice hockey tournament in Vienna, which combined the 52nd world and 63rd European championships, will definitely occupy a special place in the history of these competitions, with raised standards shown by all entrants, and an intriguing dénouement that kept players and fans alike in suspense till the final whistle in the closing game.

The managers of the four top teams comment below on the tournament, their own sides and their rivals.

TOMMY SANDLIN **(Sweden).** Ice hockey fans are sure to remember the Vienna championship for a long time to come both for the quality of play and the drama.

The results of the qualifying matches, which divided the field into two groups of fours, mirrored the real alignment of forces. The F.R.G. could also have laid a strong claim to a place in the final, but the game played out of the rink by some International Ice Hockey Federation functionaries, who first took points away from them and then handed them back, certainly had an adverse effect on the team's fighting spirit.

Sweden, Czechoslovakia and Canada all made a better showing than in previous years. The U.S.S.R. remained the favourites, but they had been effectively overtaken by the three sides in the standard of play.

We clinched the world title again, 25 years after our previous triumph in the United States in 1962. That's far too long an interval.

I'd like to give their due to the very sportsmanlike Soviet side, who battled for victory in the play-off with Czechoslovakia to the very end. Their win landed us in first place. I think we deserved it.

Our team included players from nine Swedish clubs as well as three NHL (National Hockey League) forwards—Sandström, Loob and Carlsson. Together with Gustafsson, defencemen Eldebrink and Albelin, and our fine tender Lindmark, they formed the team's backbone. But they were the best among equals. Our strength today really lies in our being a well-matched team. We also have a playing style of our own, and that was the key to our coming out on top.

One thing that worried me was the refereeing. It didn't match the level of play.

VICTOR TIKHONOV **(U.S.S.R.).** The championship in Vienna differed favourably from many earlier ones. The four leading teams had markedly improved their game, and I mean whole teams rather than individual players.

Finland and the F.R.G., too, drew really close to the four front-runners, and even the United States and Switzerland, who ended up at the bottom, also gave a good account of themselves in some matches.

The Soviet team unexpectedly were only a pale simulacrum of themselves at the play-off stage. Even so, we didn't lose a single game. To be sure of winning such lengthy competitions today, which are in fact two different championships following one right after the other, a team need to have a double reserve of energy and skills. That, however, is beyond any side. The choice of players for the Soviet squad, of course, left much to be desired. It is essential to have a better balanced team. We had picked the very best for the championship, but not all of those who excel at home also proved first-rate in Vienna.

Speaking of refereeing, I should say it is becoming a brake on the progress of the sport. I can name many games—even those in which we weren't involved—where the referees obviously failed to cope with their duties. My colleagues are also worried about it.

JAN STARSI **(Czechoslovakia).** The championship was an indisputable success. The vast majority of matches, including the U.S. and Swiss teams' clashes with the claimants to medals, were spellbinding. The formerly yawning gap in skills between the pace setters and the also-rans just isn't there any more.

There were many more impressive players this time round, but it is hard to judge whether or not they are real stars, as the teams now use all four sections in every game and many players only appear on the ice when their turns come for a matter of seconds.

Sweden fielded its best team for six or seven years. It is interesting that the country's home-based pucksters are, to my mind, much stronger than those playing in the NHL. This is why Sandlin recruited only three of his men from overseas, but they all fit in well.

I also liked the Canadians. Even if not star-studded, they are a well-balanced, up-and-coming and disciplined team. King has been studying European ice hockey thoroughly, and he knows how to play with us.

Even with as many as nine newcomers, the Czechoslovak side did much better than last year in Moscow. This applies first of all to the standard of play. We have a remarkable goalkeeper, Hasek, and a well-matched team. I'd also like to single out defenceman Benak and forwards Pasek and Hrdina.

It hurts to have lost the gold after being just five minutes away from it. But life goes on, and I'm sure that, with the team we now have, there are triumphs in store for us at future tournaments.

DAVE KING **(Canada).** After the preliminaries, in which we looked stronger with every game, I hoped we'd fare better in the play-offs. But I can admit today that our final fourth place was consistent with our performance: the three other teams were certainly superior.

This time all sides demonstrated a greater variety of playing patterns and increased adaptability. I had kept wondering how the best teams would defend themselves against the Soviet squad, who like to control the puck and do it very well. I got my answers watching the U.S.S.R. play Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Finland and the F.R.G.

The Canadian team included players from the national Olympic side and nine NHL clubs. Our teamwork, alas, was not good enough. But I'm grateful to everybody, especially defencemen Hartsburgh and Murphy and forwards Tanti and Dineen: they showed themselves real leaders.

The tournament itself made a strong impression. I believe each one of the teams found a lot of useful things to learn from it.

Interviewed by BORIS LEVIN

Vienna—Moscow

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BBC ORCHESTRA

The British musicians who came to Moscow 20 years ago in a —30°C frost remember that winter. They remember how they shivered in the unaccustomed cold and how warmly they were received by the Moscow audiences.

Many changes have taken place in the BBC Symphony Orchestra since then. It has acquired young musicians and a new leading conductor, John Pritchard. But the traditions have remained unchanged. Not only as regards repertoire—it has always given preference to the works of 20th-century composers. It has preserved its high standards of performance, its desire to convey to the listener the full depth of the music performed.

Founded more than 50 years ago, the BBC Orchestra is in many respects unique in Britain. With its 111 musicians, it is the biggest symphony orchestra in the country. And, unlike most other British orchestras, its musicians work on permanent contracts.

The present concerts given by the BBC Orchestra in the U.S.S.R. may well be described as something of a joint undertaking. Part of the concerts were conducted by Yuri Temirkanov, with the British pianist Barry Douglas as soloist and with works by British composers predominating in the programme. On the other hand, John Pritchard emphasized Russian music; his concerts featured Natalya Gutman, the Soviet cellist.

"Our guest concerts in Moscow and Leningrad coincided with the visit to the U.S.S.R. of the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher," John Pritchard said to a New Times interviewer. "This was a happy coincidence. It would be a good thing if the friendship between the musicians of our two countries were to be matched by friendship between our peoples."

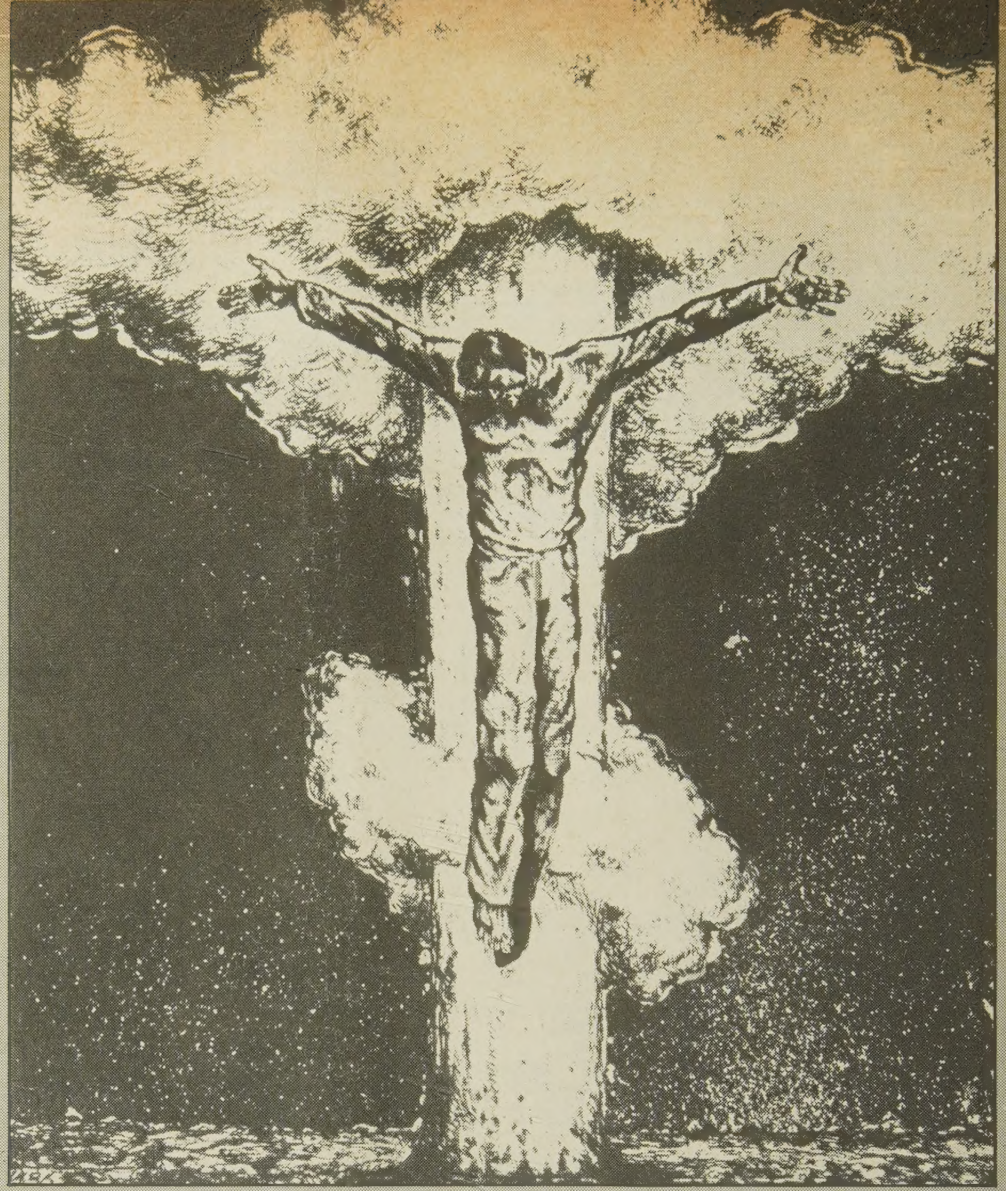
IRINA LAGUNINA

Photos by A. Ratnikov

John Pritchard conducting.

The BBC Symphony Orchestra is performing a symphony by the British composer O. Knussen. The pianist Barry Douglas, winner of the first prize and gold medal at the 8th International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, took part in the orchestra's concerts.

Large Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire.



INTERNATIONAL CONTEST

MAN AND MANKIND

Igor Smirnov (U.S.S.R.)

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